The Mature Man's Difficulties With His Bible

D. W. FAUNCE, D. D.

Author of

"A Young Man's Difficulties with His Bible"

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By

D. W. FAUNCE, D. D.

Author of

"A Young Man's Difficulties with His Bible"
"Inspiration Considered as a Trend"
"Hours with a Sceptic," etc.

TRANSYLVANIA BIBLE SCHOOL
FREEPORT, PA.

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PREFATORY NOTE

SOME years ago the author of this volume put forth a little book entitled "A Young Man's Difficulties with His Bible." A friend sends him this word: "Your other book helped me, as well as many others, when I was a young man. Now prepare another book as its companion on the more mature man's difficulties with his Bible, taking up the more modern difficulties, as you have met them in your pastoral work." The result of this advice is the present volume. The author has had in mind not so much the professed theologian, nor yet those whose abundant leisure allows them to read larger volumes, but those busy men who still find time to read the newer books and the magazines in which, not infrequently, difficulties are suggested concerning biblical facts.

May He who used the other book to help some who now occupy foremost places in the church and the world, condescend to bless this humble effort of one who keenly feels some of the modern objections to biblical statements, and yet still loves and trusts the Book on the study of which he has bestowed more than half a century—a Book he hopes by and by to study more fully in the light of the countenance of God.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., 1908. D. W. FAUNCE.

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The Mature Man's Difficulties with His Bible

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE AND MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY

A YOUNG man's difficulties with his Bible[1] may have ceased to disturb him. His former questions have had for him a fairly satisfactory answer. Objections once deemed almost fatal to his belief in the Bible have disappeared under his increasing knowledge of the volume.

But there may have come to him new perplexities. In the very process of settling the old questions new ones have emerged, so that though substantial vantage has been gained, and certain facts are fixed beyond all reasonable doubt in his mind, other difficulties of a wholly unlike kind confront him as he advances into middle life and as he goes on into those more philosophic years which belong to

[1] See "A Young Man's Difficulties with His Bible," by the author.

thoughtful age. New knowledge not only of the Bible itself, but of human opinions about its interpretation, brings new questions which require new solutions. And these very solutions often suggest to the growing man new difficulties. They may, however, only show where the man now stands. They indicate his present latitude and longitude. In the end, if this man is obedient in heart and life to the truth as it is given him to see it, he will be led on to larger certainty and a more firmly established faith.

This process is recognized in all other departments of human knowledge. Every step in discovery, with its new certainties, discloses to the student additional problems for fresh investigation. Alps rise above Alps, and if their number and height at first appall and discourage, in the end they are an incentive to the ambition of the man who climbs earnestly and means to be victorious. But his views of the mountains he is climbing change somewhat with every mile he travels. The change is not in the Alps, but in the position of the man who climbs. In the case of the biblical student the change is not in the book, but in the man's own larger development. He is himself moving onward. And this makes all the difference. Youth does not on any subject see with the same eye as does manhood. A boy standing on the shore of a bay with which he is familiar thinks the bay to be the ocean. By and by, sailing outside the bay, he comes to the

actual ocean itself. The heavens with their few stars in his home sky are now a vast dome set in its immeasurable depths with starry worlds, and those heavens are bending over and bounding that ocean on every side. He is in a larger world. And this process of a broadening experience obtains not only in common life and in scientific research, but it has especial development in a man's study of the Bible. New questions necessarily arise with new investigations. New knowledge settles some difficulties only to open others.

So too, it is a commonly recognized matter that during the last fifty years there has been a great development in analytical method. Sometimes it is forgotten that analysis is only one of the tools for securing mental and moral results; that analysis needs synthesis to achieve anything of worth. Analysis picks apart when there is complexity. Synthesis selects among materials, throws away the useless, and combines all that is proven into a new and completed whole. The great tendency of the present time is to analyze—and to stop just there. It is simply to make objections; to pull apart and never bring together; only to criticize; to mark sun-spot and forget sunshine. By this one-sided method no man can come to the knowledge of the truth. It simply encourages his own mind in negation. Instead of "the will to believe," by which alone there is any real progress, he cultivates "the will to doubt." One must resist this tendency;

or rather, one must practise himself in the habit of synthetic construction as he gets on in life. For only in this way can he acquire the power and precision that will be a continuous source of satisfaction in the ripeness of a serene age.

Analysis must indeed be given its due place. We cannot walk comfortably over suspected ground by refusing to know what a careful and reverent scholarship has ascertained about the biblical books, nor can we refuse to examine that great volume of religious experience in which spiritual souls have expressed their satisfactions. But these results of scholarship and testimonies of Christian souls are mere material furnished for that synthesis which by seeing truth as related to truth, rejoices in the grand wholeness of biblical teaching. We must guard ourselves against the narrowness that sees only single incidents, and forgets the great purpose and final end of God in revelation. The peculiarities of the Scripture writings, their great variety, their wonderful compass as now historical and then devotional, as at one time prophetic and at another biographical, as here narrative in form and there epistolary, as Semitic in tone and yet world-wide in spirit, as Oriental in phrase and yet universal in moral import, as belonging to successive periods of what is now antiquity and yet so broad in scope as to cover the present and unfold the future—all these things in their multiplicity show where difficulties are sure to be found by the student, unless

he can learn to adjust part to part and have due respect to the relation of each part to the grand wholeness of the volume.

In the course of this discussion, it is proposed to name some of these difficulties which naturally occur to those passing out of early manhood into maturer years; difficulties, also, suggested by more modern questions about the Bible.

Proof that Shall be Beyond all Possibility of Mistake.

A friend puts it in this way: "In so important a matter, involving such immense interests in this world and that to come, there should be no possibility of any man's making a mistake about the Bible as a revelation from God. There should be evidence equal to mathematical demonstration." The new study of comparative religions has made the Christian world thoroughly aware that there are other sacred books. Arnold's "Light of Asia" was to the popular mind a revelation of what scholarly men had always known. It was seen that great systems of religion were founded on those sacred books. Children were taught them as our children are the Bible. And all this was especially true of the Orient. That Orient is the natural home of religions. It was urged that all of them were more venerable and had swayed more millions than our Christianity; that these people of the far East, from the highest to the lowest, were always ready

to discuss their religions. They are earnest and honest about their beliefs. The greatest temples and the most extensive worship of the world are found in those lands. Those religions have their saints and martyrs, their heroes and apostles. Prayers and hymns they have, in some instances singularly like our Psalms, in one sentence—to be followed indeed, in the next, with words of the most revolting superstition. From some source there have come into these most degraded systems of belief, sentiments of justice and maxims of morality. These better teachings may be due to those great ethical ideas natural to every human soul. They must have come also, as the survivals of an originally pure faith, of which all these systems are a terrible corruption. In each of these systems, considered as a system, there is nothing to be commended and everything to be, as a system, condemned. But while all of them are a departure from the primitive monotheism, some of them are an advance on the systems that preceded them, showing how that Divine Providence which presided over the moral development of the race is to be seen as preparing step by step for the reception of the one pure faith of Christ.

And just as there are gleams of a better thought in these religions, notwithstanding all their debasement, so there have appeared all along through the centuries men of philosophic mind who, while defending the popular beliefs of their time, were far

above their fellow-men in their individual character. They do not seem to have seen the complete antagonism between their religious theories and the morality they taught and which they often practised. They failed to notice that their influence, since they clung to their religions, was on the whole disastrous to their fellow-men; that while they were weaving their poetic fancies about the most monstrous beliefs, the people were taking those fables for facts; that while these better men were defending those wretched beliefs by theories of philosophy, the great mass of the people, in applying those beliefs to common life, were sinking into the most hopeless depravity. There is evil enough in Christian lands, but it is all absolutely contrary to the teachings of the Bible, while in heathendom the abominations are the direct result of the superstition engendered by the sacred books. The evil inheres in the system. The poison is in the blood. The sad fruitage is the legitimate product of the evil tree.

As one studies these religions, the question will force itself upon him whether all this could not have been prevented; whether a Bible could not have been given to the world so thoroughly authenticated that *mistake as to its divine origin would be impossible.*

We might think that the divine prompting—considered apart from the divine wisdom—would lead to such a volume. But what if such a volume—

dropping now the consideration of its possibility—would thwart the very purpose God had in putting man where through moral discipline he could achieve moral character? A Bible that a man would have to believe because he could not help it would secure a belief without the slightest moral value. Something would be gained in certainty; but far more would be lost in other respects. In that way—if it were possible—all difficulties would be avoided; all beliefs become one by ceasing to be moral, because merely intellectual beliefs; and the Bible would become a kind of religious Euclid. Only in that way could the proposed unity be possible. But even then would this proposed end be secured? By the conditions of the problem, proof beyond all possibility of mistake—substantially mathematical proof—that God speaks in the Bible, is to be furnished. This would mean not only a miracle in the book, but a miracle in each man's case, securing him from mistake as to the biblical revelation. This would mean as many miracles as there are men. And each man must have the miracle repeated as often as he opens the supposed Bible. To state clearly such a proposition about a Bible and about the men who were to use it is sufficient to show its impossibility.

But what is possible is just this: a special revelation in which God peculiarly reveals himself along the lines of human literature; in other terms, a "written revelation" about himself. True, some

have spoken against what they have been pleased to call a "book revelation." But why not a "book revelation"? A man through a book instructs his brother man. Surely then, God may teach man made in his own image by a book. He has used a thousand things in the material world for revealing himself preparatory to that of a revelation by means of human literature. He made the world not only for man's dwelling-place, but for the manifestation of his own wisdom and power. "All thy works praise thee," cries a devout singer of the olden time. When a party of men was standing on an eminence which overlooked an extensive park laid out by a great landscape gardener, one of the party turned to him with the remark, "And you love all this beauty?" The quick answer came, "Yes; and another loves it more than I do." "And who may he be?" was the next question. Baring reverently his head, the gardener answered, "God; he loves beauty and reveals himself in it. This is his handwriting through me." The handwriting of God through the handwriting of men in the forms of human literature is within the bounds of the possible. And if we pass from the simple idea of a book to that of a great thought running through it, we are still in the realm of the possibilities. If human language, as most of us believe, was a special gift of God, bestowed that man might speak not only to his Creator, but to his fellow-men, then that power of consecutive thought which lies

back of human language and finds in it its expression, can be utilized in the divine wisdom by furnishing such a book to the world. Literature has its many examples of what may be called human inspiration, in which a man of remarkable genius impresses his thought on others so deeply that a whole generation of writers and speakers has felt his preponderating influence. It were then, a possible thing for God divinely to inspire men who had "the genius for religion," and the result would be a series of books, written indeed by men, each writer exhibiting his own peculiar style, and equally, each under the guidance, consciously or unconsciously, of special divine inspiration. One great thought getting always more complete expression as the ages should run on would pervade such a series of sacred books. And they should all tend to a culmination in some Person than whom there could not be a greater manifestation of God. For thought seeks always embodiment in personality.

A book of many parts made one by a single dominating thought coming from God and as a special revelation, is possible. Advancing another step, we may claim that such a revelation is not only a possibility, but that it has an immense probability. Whatever may have been true of the probable methods of God in his self-revelation in former centuries, our own century asks for authentic and documentary proofs of past events.

Surely it would be expected that if God took into account the expectations of former centuries as to the manner of revealing himself to them, he would have regard, likewise, to the expectations of an age capable of estimating the literary value of a record of historic facts. Some such book is demanded by the situation, and such a book has been given.

And never has this book which Christians regard as a sacred volume been so much studied as it is to-day. A vast literature from the world's foremost scholars has grown up about it. What if the demand of these present centuries, ripe for historic study, was foreseen, and the documentary evidence of a whole series of divine manifestations preserved for this very time of special need? Surely, all this was not only possible, but probable. There would be no need of repeating the events, with such a record carefully made. History is being pushed back by modern investigation. Documents older than Genesis get the credence of scholars. The historical methods of half a century ago, by which nearly all historic material was held to be more or less mythical, are no longer pursued. Positions then held are utterly abandoned to-day. The old results, mainly negative, are now discredited. We are getting more and more confidence in historic certainty. It is seen that the biblical incidents lie far within the scope of historic verity. It is recognized that such a record as that of the Bible could

have been made; and that if made, would be of immense worth not only for man's moral welfare, but for the better self-revelation of God. So too, it is getting to be recognized that the Bible, if a revelation from God about himself, should not be treated as if it were simply a record of man's moral development through the successive ages of human history. It would be then on a par with any other ancient book in which we might discern incidentally human development. Homer shows the Homeric age and Virgil the splendor of the Roman centuries in literary art. All such things can be ascertained from ordinary volumes. They are man's history of man. But the Bible purports to be God's history of God as he has manifested himself, and as he has secured, through man, the record of those manifestations. Such a kind of Bible is the only Bible worth having. Such a volume, recording these manifesting events, prepared by human writers who have divine sanctions for their work, gives us the nearest approach possible to that religious certainty which some would demand. It is no book written in the skies and let down ready-made to the earth. It is a book that had a steady growth to an evident culmination—a book intended not to end all study, but to stir men to continuous study, so that God's revelations in it may be better understood.

The crass mechanical conception of "a book about which it would be impossible for any man to make a mistake" must be abandoned. It would be

as impossible a book as it would be a useless one for the end desired. Consider also, that such a book would have no correlation to known historic events. It would have to stand utterly apart from all human literature, and so would really defeat the purpose of a revelation from God through that medium. In the case of such a supposed book, all intellectual and moral considerations as proofs of its origin would have no place. One question—one only—was it written in heaven and dropped down among men—would be before us. All would be staked on a single alleged fact; and that fact a difficult one to prove. The supposed book could have no alliance with any event in the long history of the past, and so no hold on the sympathy of mankind. It would be a picture without perspective. There would be no interweaving of its events with the history of mankind. Its certainty —the only possible reason for such a book—could extend only to a few things. Its advent would be the solitary instance of an unconnected fact.

Happily, we are not shut up to so crass a conception. Happily, we have no such Bible. We can approach the necessary degree of moral certainty in quite another way. Step by step we get at our assurance. We do it by comparing part with part, by evidence external and internal, by the testimony which comes from historical study and also from the cognate experiential evidence of long centuries of Christian men and women as to the re-

sults of believing the Christian facts and practising the Christian precepts. The evidence is varied and cumulative. The divine method meets the needs. All other proposed methods for giving us a Bible start a perfect host of difficulties that far outnumber those presented by the Bible actually in our hands. Tested by years of study, the biblical method that God has chosen more and more commends itself. We would not change it if we could, and could not if we would. There are kinds of proof on such matters quite as reliable as is mathematical proof in its own department.

It is sometimes asked if God will permit an honest seeker to make fatal mistake about the Bible. But such a questioner should define what he means by "honest." There is an honesty that is partial, in the sense of seeing only a part of what is involved; an honesty also that is narrow, taking account only of man's duty to man as described in some parts of the Bible; an honesty that prides itself on taking great pains to know what scholars eminent in science or philosophy think of the Bible, while overlooking what God himself has said about it; an honesty that claims it only fair to take up and examine all objections before making a decision —much as if a man in search of a drink of water to allay his thirst should think it only fair first to taste of every liquid on the shelves of the apothecary to be sure it was not water before drinking from the glass in his hand. There is always, on all subjects,

a right way to seek the right. Intellectual honesty is needful, but not that alone. Moral honesty is even more essential in a moral matter like the truth about the Bible. Said a man to his friend, who pleaded honest search and failure to find, "If you are thoroughly honest in this search, you will pray to the God whose existence you own. You ask me honestly for help. Now ask God as honestly. If you will not pray, I cannot concede your moral honesty in this search." He was right in the demand. No man can truly apprehend the biblical religion apart from his own moral nature. Reason is not all. Soul is of at least equal authority, and must have its place in any thorough-going honesty as to the Bible. And this honesty means also, that as far as a man gets light, he shall practise this Bible in its nearest commands. So that when head and heart and life work together, this man comes within the sphere of promise that "wisdom shall be given liberally."

The Bible, then, is not a book so coming to us that no man can possibly make mistake about its divine source; nor are there as many million miracles as there are readers, thus securing each of them from possible mistake, in that way securing mathematical certainty and so perfect unity of belief. But the Bible is a book that proposes ways of gaining moral certainty about itself as a revelation from God, by calling men to honest, hearty study of it, to earnest prayer for guidance about it, and to

instant and constant obedience to duty as it shall be made known to them. Unnumbered thousands have done this, and know that the Bible is from God. "If," said Jesus, "any man willeth to do, he shall know."

It must be remembered that mathematics appeals only to one way of ascertainment. It has to do with the measuring of numbers. It concerns itself only with quantity, never with quality. It cannot measure a single quality of the mind and soul of man. It knows nothing of morals. Its only worth in respect to this matter now under discussion is that it supplies a mere "figure of speech" to describe "exactness." It appeals to one—one only—of the original, instinctive principles of our human constitution—the principle of numbers. But the Bible appeals to two of the grandest of these original and instinctive principles in our human constitution. One of them is the appeal to "reason"—the mind acting before the law of "the true or false," a law found in itself. The other is the appeal to the mind acting before the law of "the right and the wrong," a law also found in its own self. And these appeals come to any man who really wants to know. A man cannot know more than that he knows. What is wanted is something better than any mathematical certainty could give us, were such kind of certainty possible in such a matter—viz., moral certainty. The angels' song at Christ's birth, according to one translation of it,

was " Peace on earth to men of good will." There is the peace of moral certainty for those who will take God's method of gaining it. Pascal's dictum still holds: " There is light enough for those who wish to see; none others need ask for more."

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CHAPTER II

THE BIBLE AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

THE "scientific spirit" is justly lauded. It proposes to investigate by laboratory methods all matters with which science has to do. All things must be subjected to experiment. Everything must be proved. It takes as little as possible—some would say it takes nothing—for granted. But notwithstanding this boast, it is obliged to take for granted the integrity of the eyes that watch the experiment, the reality of the things examined, and the normal condition of the mental faculties employed in making the analysis and in formulating the results And these things send us back of all material science into the realms of psychological and philosophical inquiry. So that the strictly scientific method is not of universal application, nor are its results on matters outside of scientific material either basal or final. They depend on things about which if there is anywhere an error, the conclusions drawn by the scientific method must be held in suspense. The method has its sphere, and within that sphere wonders have been accomplished. It has made such amazing changes during the century just closed that we seem to be living in another world, so far as physical comfort and con-

venience are concerned. It has added immensely to the volume of human life, so that we live more fully, because in touch with more things in an enlarged world. Every household in its arrangements, every manufactory in its equipment, every street of the city in its engineering, lighting, water-supply, and sewer system, is showing the advantage of the application of science to practical life. Surgery and medicine for the sick and the skilful preparation of foods for those in health, furnish examples of marvelous progress. Human life is lengthened and enriched, and the welfare of the human race is advanced through science pursued by modern methods.

What wonder then, that the phrase "scientific method" has come into common use; and that on all subjects whatsoever men are asking for "scientific proof." If they mean by it carefulness and exactness, search for truth on any matter, patient investigation and cautiousness in drawing conclusions from ascertained facts, then the term may be employed rightfully in matters outside of strict science; and laudation of the phrase, even in morals and religion, is allowable. We may be asked to use all carefulness of investigation concerning the Bible, its credibility, its integrity, the evidence that in it God speaks as in no other book. But we must remember that in the realms of morals and of religion, men as keen as any now living, did some thinking before modern science was born.

Trained in mathematics, they knew how to be exact. They knew and used the laws of evidence; and those laws were as well defined long centuries ago as they are to-day. Not a single proposition has been added to geometry since Euclid lived. Men then had not only sense, but learning. And scholars at that time were exactly as capable of judging whether or not a thing was proved as any of us living to-day. If they did not apply themselves as zealously to physical science as do the moderns, it was because scholarship used itself on questions of intellectual and moral import.

The old universities of Europe produced splendid scholars in the by-gone centuries. And the universities of Germany and England, since the Reformation have also done notable work along the line of biblical inquiries. Historical investigation concerning the biblical writings was incessant and conclusions then drawn deserve attention. Never were the sacred books more carefully scrutinized. The old evidences of biblical authenticity which satisfied those scholars may be found collected and restated in books now passing into antiquity. Such collections made by biblical scholars from the writings of the Fathers show them anything but careless and credulous men. If they erred in any direction, it was—happily for us—in an excessive regard to the skeptical moods of their age, inducing a minute carefulness in examination of the evidence. Their scholarship was massive. For many of them, students by na-

ture, there was little else to be studied, and they therefore gave themselves to the task of biblical criticism with their whole mind and soul. Their caution about admitting material into the canon extended to each book. The whole matter of what is now called the "higher criticism" was gone over by them, with perhaps a somewhat different spirit from that occasionally evinced by some modern scholars. They knew what they were about. They were capable of judging. Considering objections and giving them due weight, those scholars made their decisions. If some few difficulties have emerged in modern study, the great mass of the biblical difficulties were the same for them as for us. Their solutions of some of them stand accepted by all the scholarship of to-day. If "scientific method" means painstaking in investigation and carefulness in statement of results, they used it. They knew the importance of the problem of scriptural certainty. No modern scientist was more devoted to "seeking the truth itself apart from all consequences" than were some of those men. They came to know why they believed in their Bible. The heroes of science have deserved their renown; but not less renown is due to the heroes who, in the highest scholarly circles of the former centuries, defended their faith in the sacred Scriptures when in daily peril of a martyr's death and in daily expectation of a martyr's crown.

As to the civilization, culture, and scholarship of

the times described by the writers of the Old Testament, a great mistake has been lately corrected. We have gained within the last few years new knowledge not only of the literary, but of the scientific achievements of the older nations. We now know as we did not formerly that side by side with barbarians there were educated peoples. The disparaging words of only a quarter of a century ago about the lack of civilization among the earlier Egyptians and Assyrians and Hebrews are altogether out of date. Even their science commands respect. And while never making any such swift and even startling advance as that seen in the great century just closed, those men of the oldest nationalities did some most praiseworthy scientific work. The Egyptians, farther back than the days of Moses, made scientific catalogues of the starry heavens which are the basis of those in use to-day. It is claimed that an astronomy was known which was later rediscovered, and is now called the Copernican system; that they used the mariner's compass, and that they doubled the Cape of Good Hope. The great Pyramid of Cheops is exactly oriented, thus showing knowledge of both astronomic fact and astronomic law. There is mathematic proportion of base to height and exactness of angle as well as a thorough knowledge of the fundamental principles of mathematical structure.

Egyptian architecture, to one whose model is the light and delicate creations of Greek art, at first

seems clumsy. But when one gets fully on his mind and heart the Egyptian idea of the grand, the massive, the enduring as expressed in art, then palace, temple, tomb, and statue have a grandeur and impressiveness elsewhere unsurpassed. Nothing is ever careless, nothing unfinished with respect to the object sought. Its science is shown not only in the selection of geologically substantial material, but in a treatment that is both architecturally and technically correct. These men never heard our modern phrase the "scientific method," but they wrought in its spirit. They rigorously excluded the fantastic and frivolous. Reality with them is basal. Their Sphinx looks calmly out upon all the ages that have been and shall be. Nowhere is any suggestion of the transient or the accidental. Tombs and temples in their architecture speak to every man who beholds them of the fixed and even of the eternal. Much that is claimed for the more ancient Egyptians is also claimed for their great rivals, the Assyrians, and for the older nations inhabiting the lands between them now known as Palestine. Situated between Egypt and Assyria, this central land of Palestine, through which passed not only the great caravans of commerce, but those great exchanges of human literature and of Oriental culture, it could not but receive from both the best that each could give of every form of human advancement.

It is obvious that the educational exactness re-

quired in the arts and sciences must have taught these ancient peoples carefulness in all other lines of investigation. Contemporary with the unearthing, during the last few years, of very ancient tablets showing thorough knowledge of the exact sciences of arithmetic and geometry, are careful records of a period not long ago called prehistoric, but now admitted to be far within the bounds of veritable history. These show selections from other records which were a part of yet more ancient documents. There is indicated study amid historic material then known as having been gathered from a remote antiquity. Carefulness and an exercised and balanced judgment are shown as to what to select and to preserve. Documents made under such conditions are not to be regarded as waste material accidentally accumulating and accidentally surviving until to-day.

And because of the exactness of scientific work in parallel lines, modern historians are giving great credit to these newly discovered historic documents. These records have their own peculiarities, sharply distinguishing them from modern histories. There is the characteristic method of "beginning again" as from a new point of view, so familiar to us in the Hebrew Pentateuch. It is the water-mark of those times. It belongs to all Aryan story. It has the exact flavor of Semitic antiquity. It is atmosphere in method. There is the grouping of incidents rather than the orderly story of successive

times. The document is as ancient in style as it is in matter. Its exactness is in its fidelity to fact. And for these very reasons it is trustworthy. One must not ask for modern scientific method, but only for the ancient scientific spirit in the construction of the older books of the Bible. In either case what is required is historic carefulness in selection and in composition.

And the same is to be said about the references to the recognized geographical and geological knowledge of those times, and to the general naturalistic beliefs of the ages in which the ancient biblical writings were produced. All such allusions are incidental. They occur not in a treatise on geography or geology, but in a treatise on religion. When some terms must be used to describe natural phenomena, those in popular use had to be employed. There were no others known. The modern terms would have been misunderstood. Such references to current conceptions were necessary. And they abate not one jot in the value of a book, the object of which was to teach religious truth. To regard such usage as due to mistake, ignorance, or lack of divine guidance is absurd. Such usage is rather an indication of exactly the opposite of any error. It shows the age of the writer to be that which he claims for his record. And hundreds of the allusions to places, rulers, customs, and to sacred and secular observances in Egypt, Assyria, and Palestine show how certainly the biblical story

is concerned with the actual scenes of Oriental life. They are indications, not of carelessness, but of exactness; not of errancy, but of inerrancy. Scientific method and nomenclature may be expected to differ widely in the different periods of human history.

And new discovery has begotten new faith. Careful methods of study amid the more ancient material have induced new belief in their historic verity. Half a century ago historic doubt was in the ascendency. It was intimated that antiquity held in solution a vast mass of protoplastic material without form and void; that any date, even as recent as the founding of Rome, was so uncertain, and that all was so indistinct and unrelated as to be of no actual worth. The Niebuhr theory of discrediting all antiquity as of no recognizable significance has now gone by. In its place another theory obtained a temporary credence. It found in the protoplasm a little trace of life; under the myth an element of possible fact which had given rise to the myth. It sought to detect a substratum. It had much to say of "idealized history." The story of Romulus and Remus in Roman history, while largely mythical, was held to be probably the poetic presentation of some dimly known occurrence. A shred of truth might be detected by sharp eyes even in the ancient legends. Myth was everywhere the precursor of genuine history. Truth was described as slowly evolving from fable. Even the most ancient bibli-

cal stories, it was held, might have behind them some slender basis of fact. Abraham might possibly, have been a real man, rather than the ideal creation of some Hebrew romancer intent on exalting his nation by claiming an illustrious ancestry. It was argued that "the moral worth" would be the same in furnishing us with a noble lesson, whether those Hebrew worthies had a real or only a fictitious existence; that they had on still, in the biblical story, the grave-clothes which showed their resurrection, and that these mythical garments were to be stripped off and the man "loosed and let go" by our modern hands. This theory afforded a fine field for a continuous ingenuity. Just how much was myth and how much was fact was always the question. Personal equation had full play in deciding what to retain, and no two men could agree on the substratum to be accepted. This theory in some respects was an advance on that which it superseded; but in it there was little, if any, gain for those in quest of historic certainty.

But when a few years ago a discovery was made which pushed back reliable history two thousand years and gave us historic tablets of unquestioned genuineness far older than the days of Moses, the whole idea of myth as related to history was completely changed. Both the above-named theories must now be abandoned, for two things were absolutely established: They were, first, the reality of ancient historic writing; and secondly, the fact that

myth and history had had parallel existence through the ages. It is this latter fact that has overthrown the Niebuhr theory of protoplastic and unreliable material, and equally the theory of the derivation of historic fact from mythical conception. Neither myth nor fact was parent of the other. Both are now seen as existing at the same period of time. History and myth, like truth and error, like right and wrong, have been parallel facts. They are two streams, each flowing in its own channel. Exactly as we see to-day the ever-enduring antagonism, so it always has been through the ages. He who writes the history of our twentieth century will have to record the parallel existence of strong contrasts. Never was there nobler statesmanship, never more demagogism; never in medicine such knowledge, never such charlatanism; never such pursuit of truth, never such prevalence of error; never purer morals; but what other age has seen the filthiness of Mormonism exalted to a religion and the ridiculous metaphysics of Christian Science accepted by intelligent men?

And the historian of the present age will need the "scientific spirit" in order to distinguish between these opposites which exist side by side. In like manner the myths and the historic facts of the olden time have their parallel. Historic material there is; and likewise there is mythical material. And the historic method has its historic tests which are as accurate in securing results as those of sci-

ence in the strictly scientific sphere. Accuracy in investigation and reliability in result are the things desired alike in science, in history, and in religion. Our theories are gaining, slowly it may be, but really, their recognition and significance. The events of the ancient Hebrew history which it is claimed in the Scriptures Moses was commanded to "write in a book," were of worth not only for those then living, but for all the ages to come. The record of them could have been written in that age, and would have been written; and once written, among such a people the records could and would have been preserved. Separated from contemporaneous moral error, sanctified by the belief of that people in the one holy God, who would not tolerate any iniquity, historic documents were produced to which ever after there was to be appeal. The ancient facts were interwoven with song, were rehearsed in subsequent story, perpetuated in significant rite, reviewed, restated, and made the basis of appeal in their discourse, and were the foundation on which prophetic utterance was based by their national seers. Psalmist and annalist embalmed in verse and in narration the great things God had done. We can imagine no better way for the historic preservation of the story of such occurrences than that adopted in the Bible.

There is also another element which the genuine "scientific spirit" cannot afford to neglect. It is the claim of a special divine inspiration. If the

Book is in some things like other books, and its accuracy is in those respects to be treated exactly as are other books, it is in some other respects exactly unlike any other book; and so in regard to these peculiarities, it is to be especially tested. There are some things that can be described rather than defined. Inspiration is one of them. The divine inspiration can be no more defined than can the divine existence. And even in description we can but approximate. Hence, no one theory of inspiration is exhaustive. Each of the many proposed has, it may be, its one element of truth. We may—for the single purpose now had in view—describe it from the view-point of our human need of it. We may say that what we need is a divine assurance of moral certainty in the teaching of moral and religious truth. *Seen from the point of our human need,* we may expect (1) the inspiration of the facts, (2) of the providential arrangements, (3) of the human thought, (4) of the human language.

1. Historic fact is the basis of all. These things did or did not occur; they are facts or fictions. The claim is that the facts—omitting now the further question of the possible inspiration of the record of them—that the facts themselves were inspired. There was nothing accidental or incidental or uncaused. God was concerned in them. All apart from man, some of them took place. True, there is a stricter sense in which men only are capable of the higher form of inspiration. But in the

broader sense events used for moral purposes may be spoken of as inspired. The Spirit of God is represented as breathing on the face of the waters, and also as breathing the moral soul into the body of man in Eden. The physical is more than the physical, because of something behind it, without which it could have neither existence nor meaning. "In the beginning, God"—and therefore ever after, God. And because of this original and fundamental fact of the divine inspiration of physical events starting at creation and continuing in all the divine evolution, there is an inspiration of things. And the writers of the Scriptures, having once struck this key-note, never flat from it in all their symphony. They make actual events to be the foundation of everything in religion.

And it is the same in the New Testament. The speeches of Stephen and Peter and Paul, as given in the Acts, have the same note—great care for the basal facts. They recite the Old Testament events. They add thereto the new events of their new evangel. So absorbed did one of them become in the new facts that he speaks of them as "my gospel." The evangelists in their narratives seldom offer explanatory comment. They hold themselves rigorously to the facts. The apostles are one with the evangelists in this characteristic—their regard for actual occurrences. They claim to know that in former times as well as in their own, "some had followed cunningly devised fables." But they as-

sert that they themselves had always insisted on proven fact. When they spoke they were not the men to grace their speech with popular fable. They not only denounced legend and myth as believed by others, but they asserted and then emphasized actuality as connected with Jesus Christ. They see Old Testament events, from creation on, as God's partial revelation of himself; and the new gospel as the more complete manifestation of the same God. All things had been directed and dominated from first to last in nature and in history so as to show God in self-manifestation. And when this is recognized as the object of the Bible, a whole class of difficulties raised by the mistaken view that the Bible is intended mainly as a history of the moral evolution of humanity vanishes at once.

2. We must also keep in mind the fact that the biblical story is written under the idea of an inspired arrangement in human affairs. No one thing is to be judged of as occurring alone. It is merely an item in a connected series. Separately viewed, a thing may seem contrary to all our ordinary ideas of morals. It is the backward thrust of the piston. But the backward thrust, by the wise combinations in the mechanism of the engine, is just as helpful in propulsion as is the forward thrust. God is the great factor in Scripture story. His plan is a series of events under one perpetual superintendence. That early going down into Egypt was, when seen alone, a backward step, but as seen historically to-

day, it was a splendid move alike for Egypt and Israel. That captivity at Babylon helped the whole theistic idea into world-wide prominence. It teaches yet. As with the larger, so with the smaller steps. As with nations, so with individuals. God has always wrought out his plans by great men. They were "raised up for this purpose." They were precursors of the One who was to assemble in himself all those separate virtues that each of these great souls had exhibited in the centuries of divinely guided history. In that grand roll of heroes, recorded in the eleventh of Hebrews, we get a glimpse of their progressive faith corresponding to the progressive revelation of God. History has a divine meaning. We see its mountain-tops. Those biblical men caught the first rays of the morning sun. They threw the light they received over the plains on which other men lived, and these in turn rejoiced in its beams. The great events had their mission, and the great souls were God's ministers for the good of mankind.

One of the books of the Bible shows us a brave soul that has lost for a brief time this recognition of God's unslumbering care over the events of life. The book of Job may be dramatic in form, but it tells the story of a real life that has had a thousand counterparts. A good man is overwhelmed by a series of afflictions. Property goes, children die, wife reproaches, and false friends wrongly interpret these events. They insist that he must have

committed some great crime, or God would not so have afflicted him. Health fails and the mind itself reels under the strain. Satanic power adds to the intensity of the trial by suggesting that all his sorrows are wrongfully sent, and intimates an impeachment of the divine goodness or of the divine power. But the soul rights itself by insisting with itself that God must be right. That one thought saves faith from utter wreck. God may be but testing him. And now both feet are upon the rock. The idea of God as dealing with him is this man's salvation. And the story, in this grandly dramatic form, is set forth for the instruction of men in all ages. Providence is shown in the management of evil as well as of good; in both physical and moral calamity, as well as in the resulting righteousness of a man sorely tempted, but not overthrown. It may even be said of him that he is splendidly victorious through his faith in God.

And here as everywhere else there is the presentation of a divine providence that is always universal because always special. Everywhere there is method. But method shows mind. And if as some one has said " science is the orderly product of methodized inquiry," then we have in the book of Job an instance of moral inquiry carefully conducted to an orderly result in the vindication not only of the righteous character of the man, but of his God. Similarly the whole volume, when its details are examined and its incidents seen, becomes

luminous not only in its inspired events, but in its inspired orderliness as it sets forth the progressive self-revelation of God as a theme for the devout study of men "the world around and the centuries through."

3. There is also the inspiration of human thought by the divine thought. Mind everywhere among men affects men in inspirational ways. Then there must be the parallel fact that the divine mind can affect the human mind in inspirational ways, and while leaving the human mind in its voluntary and personal integrity, can secure for its action divine guidance and suggestion. A distinguished teacher in a foremost theological seminary said to his class: "None of us know the consciousness of having had a divine inspiration revealing new truth for the world." Asked if he did not believe that "all Christians had a degree of the same inspiration in the gift of the same Holy Spirit," the quick reply was that it is not a question of degree at all, but a question of the kind of divine working; that because the Holy Spirit illuminated the minds and sanctified the souls of all true Christians, it did not follow that a widely different form of spiritual influence might not be exercised on some Christians; that the inspiration to understand a Scripture already made was by no means the same sort of thing as an inspiration to make new Scripture; that there were "diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." And when the further question was pressed, whether the

professor did not believe that "the Holy Spirit was given to all men," the quick answer was returned that a visitor coming to the door was not always admitted to the home and made a member of the family; that we must not confound the natural working of the moral nature in all men with peculiar gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit granted to Christian souls for some special purpose.

The answers to the questionings of the class may have been correct, and yet we do seem to get somewhat nearer to apprehending the peculiar influence that must have come to the biblical writers when we ourselves feel spiritually stimulated by some biblical truth that comes home to our deepest nature. We know in such moments what it is to have some wide moral vista opened to us; to have the deepest, holiest feelings in us stirred into unwonted activity and the will made forceful in its decisions for right moral action. We are certain that the operation within is induced by the same Holy Spirit that gave us the particular page we hold in our hands. And as under the printing-press, the paper takes the exact impression of the type, so the prepared soul takes the special and corresponding stamp of the biblical page. We are then permitted to read the truth that moves us from the page within or from the page without. "The Spirit beareth witness." This, at the very least, is true; that such inward impression shows that the human heart is inspirable for the reception of a divine revelation and its

corresponding actuality in the inspiration of the Bible.

The inspiration of men by men—of one man's thought by another man's thought—is a recognized fact. The great masters of thought impress themselves by spoken or written words on thousands of their fellow-men. They stir others to think. Genius makes its appeal and gets its response. In philosophy what long centuries have been influenced by Plato and Aristotle. These men still rule us from their urns. The successive generations feel the spell of the great poets, and Homer and Virgil, Dante and Milton, have more power over their larger audience with the increasing years of the world's history. Orators long since dead still speak to the world. Statesmen long since passed away announced principles that still lead nations. To-day the whole vast and various world of mind vibrates anew whenever some gifted man touches the chords that are waiting to break into music in every human heart. If men thus endowed may be expected to move men, surely the expectation is warranted that God will do it. If the thought of man can give us human inspiration, then we may expect the thought of God to give us divine inspiration.

And that he should so move some men rather than others is no more strange than that he should endow some men with health denied to their fellows. Men come into the world with widely unlike spiritual capabilities. Some have the stronger con-

science and some the more loving heart. Religious susceptibility is not equally bestowed. Capacity to receive inspiration is widely various, as is capacity to interpret the inspiration which God has given to selected souls. That God should have taken the Hebrew people, the foremost monotheistic believers of the world, and to special souls among them have given special revelation as to the meaning of historic events, special revelation also of moral truth that the whole world needed to know, and then should have given also special inspiration to record these events and these revelations is what we might expect, and is just what we find. It is mind moving upon minds. In the case of the inspiration of men by a man of genius in art, philosophy, poetry, and music, the personality of those thus moved is not invaded. When Moses and David and Isaiah, when Matthew and Paul, receive the divine inspiration, it no more changes their mental characteristics than the features of their faces. They have their own way of stating their own divinely inspired thought. If they are historians, they can make use of their diligence in historic study and their judgment as to historic conclusions, and yet do it all under the guidance of God's Spirit. If poets and prophets, there is the use of their natural ability to see and foresee and to feel the poetic and prophetic afflatus. It is not a case in which God uses his almightiness, crushing individuality and acting as on brute matter. It is divine thought operating on

human thought, in the realm of mind. And it is only natural for us to believe that supernatural thought should under such circumstances and with such an end in view, influence natural thought, not by compulsion, but by inspiration Man is certainly inspirable.

4. When we come to consider the words in which this inspiration of the Bible is expressed, we find certain difficulties. Fifty years ago revelation, which is the disclosure in any way of God's thought, and inspiration which concerns the record of these revelations, were often confused, and even confounded. And the main question was about the words rather than about the more vital things behind the words. The doctrine of the divine immanence, always held indeed, had not been duly emphasized. The transcendence, *i. e.*, God *over* all things and events, had obscured the conception of the immanence, *i. e.*, God *in* all things and events. Instead of the mechanical, the more vital conception of God's relation to the whole world, including both its physical and mental departments, is now getting recognition. God is held to be in art, in science, in history, and in literature. If so, what should forbid us to hold that in some peculiar and especial way he may be in some special literature? And literature is defined as "the spoken or written production of the human mind." No man can think aside from words. And to exclude God altogether from words is to deny his immanence. To allow

him any especial place in any special literature is to accept the accuracy of the words for the end intended in that literature.

The thing—let it be remembered—for which we are here and now contending is accuracy in the teaching of moral fact and truth in the Bible. God over all, he is God in all. This immanent God may be conceived of as concerned in one way in good, and in an exactly opposite way in evil. One has his approval, the other his abhorrence. And from this difference in moral estimate and working we may argue that his relation to a special man's act in writing a given biblical book may be that of a direct divine inspiration. To allow this immanent God any especial place in such a book as the Bible is to find room also for him to use the kind and degree of divine influence that is required. For securing that accuracy, the need of which is the one great thing demanded, the inspiration of an eye-witness to an event is obviously unlike that required in the case of a prophet foretelling a future occurrence. The form, kind, and degree of the inspiration needed in the varieties of biblical literature is what makes any exact definition so difficult. But all the difficulty is precisely where it should be, and where we can see only this, that the divine supply is suiting itself to the widely varying demands of our varying human need. And the scientific spirit, seeking exactness in the record of the revelations about God, can find its culminating exercise only

in the moral and religious teaching that is specially directed and governed or—to use another word—is inspired by God himself. It is one essential law of scientific research that it must take into account all the facts at a fair estimation. In this matter of biblical study the Bible is not only to be considered as so much literature to be judged by the common rules of literary production, but also as a volume with peculiar claims that must have special consideration. If "scientific method" means carefulness on the part of the Inspirer in communicating his divine thought, and carefulness also on the part of those inspired to give the record of these things to the world, then there is to be on the part of those who study the volume exceeding diligence in ascertaining its exact meaning, and absolute honesty both of mind and heart in accepting its decisions about moral truth.

Sometimes it takes not a little moral courage—a courage that only accumulating years of biblical study can secure for us—to be willing to let the Bible speak out for itself; to submit our own opinions to it as the ultimate authority.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE AND THE HISTORIC SPIRIT

A SINGULARLY unfortunate way of speaking about the historic narratives of the Bible has lately come into vogue among some good men. It is said, "Let us be thankful that our personal religious life does not depend upon any outward facts, since it is always hard to establish such facts historically."

But is it always so very hard to establish historic facts? If it is so, then they must be accepted always with considerable doubt; and human progress, since it builds itself upon past accomplishments as the basis of future successes, must be immensely retarded. The truth is that the spirit of doubt has been evoked in many departments of human thinking by unwise methods of investigation. To begin with universal doubt is to end in universal negation. Doubt never has advanced truth. All progress is gained by believing that something can be known. We are made up so as to be able to believe. And in historic investigation there is such a thing as "the will to believe," over against "the will to doubt." It is true that certain scholars by negative methods have attempted to infuse doubt as an element to be necessarily cherished alike in sacred and in secular history.

But it can be claimed that whatever may be true elsewhere, historic faith is warranted in biblical facts, since they make a double appeal and offer a twofold line of proof. They are for the head, and equally, for the heart. There is a moral as well as a historical aspect in which they are to be considered, and so least of all events are they to be approached in the spirit of doubt. Because the Scriptures make very much of historic facts, founding indeed, in one way of considering the matter, their whole claim upon them, the great Author of the Volume has been at the utmost pains to submit to the world the best forms of proof that the human reason could demand. And the historic skepticism about the reliability not only of biblical, but of all historic facts of any considerable antiquity, appears to be unwarranted when the evidence for biblical correctness, and so of the related events, is carefully considered. And it will be seen that these historic facts are the most certain of proof of any class of facts with which we have to do.

A small portion of the sacred Scriptures is to be considered in this discussion—*the historicity of Jesus Christ*. But his historicity, once established, carries with it immense implications as to those other historic facts of which it is the crowning event.

The appeal is, first, to documentary, and then to experiential evidence.

I. Documentary evidence. The more usual way

of presenting this form of proof is by asking about the historicity of the books of the New Testament, their dates, and the circumstances under which they were written.

But another line of proof is to be followed here and now. Suppose we start with the immediate centuries *after* Christ's death. We will ask first, what we know, apart from any biblical testimony, about Jesus Christ. Just here more doubt has been expressed than anywhere else. Says a noted skeptic: "The difficulty is not to prove that Christ was believed to be a historic personage after the fourth century, but to bridge over the years between A. D. 1 and 300—three centuries." Suppose, then, we start by closing for a time—a time only—our four Gospels, and also by closing the apostolic books in their witness to the facts recorded in those Gospels. Perhaps we may come to open them again, after a little, with increasing interest. Let us begin with the apostolic Fathers, so called, including the names of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Barnabas. They were no fools, no hasty credulous persons. They had nothing to gain and nothing to lose but their lives in any assertion of their belief about what Jesus taught and did and was. What did they believe about the alleged Christian facts? Doctor Westcott, in his "Canon of the New Testament," gives a careful and critical summary of what their writings show to have been their belief. He says:

The gospel which the Fathers announce includes all the articles of the ancient creeds. Christ, we read, our God, the Word, the Lord and Creator of the world, who was with the Father before time began, humbled himself and came down from heaven and was manifested in the flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary, of the race of David according to the flesh, and a star of exceeding brightness appeared at his birth. Afterwards he was baptized of John to fulfil all righteousness, and then, speaking his Father's message, he invited not the righteous, but sinners, to come to him. Perfume was poured over his head as an emblem of the immortality which he breathed on the church. At length, under Herod and Pontius Pilate, he was crucified and vinegar and gall were given him to drink. But on the first day of the week he rose from the dead, the firstfruits of the grave, and many prophets were raised by him for whom they had waited. After his resurrection he ate with his disciples. He ascended into heaven, sat on the right hand of the Father, and thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

In this careful summary, by a competent scholar, of the teaching of the apostolic Fathers, notice (1) that these men were the immediate friends and pupils of the apostles themselves. They had taken the gospel facts directly from the lips of the apostles. They are reporting what they had learned at first hand. (2) No others living in their day who knew the apostles contradict the testimony of these men as to what the apostles themselves taught about these Christian facts. (3) And these men not only testify to what they themselves heard from the lips of the apostles, but they tell us what was the universal belief of Christians at that time about these

great cardinal facts of Christ and his religion. And some of these men in the churches to whom they wrote must also have seen and heard the apostles. Any addition to the original apostolic statements about the life and teachings of Jesus essentially conflicting with the original apostolic statements would have been detected and widely published, and the detection of such divergence would not have been allowed by keen enemies to perish from the world's literature. (4) It will be noticed that the so-called "Apostles' Creed," though not written until the fifth or sixth centuries after the writings of the apostles themselves, in its enumeration of the things to be believed, uses language almost identical with that summarized by Doctor Westcott as the teaching of the original group of the apostolic Fathers. (5) This belief of the Fathers and of the Christian community is singularly full as to the two greatest of the miraculous events in Christ's career—his virgin-birth and his resurrection and ascension. Lesser miracles did not need the naming, since those who held to the greater would not doubt the less on any ground either of impossibility or improbability. (6) The blending of doctrinal with historical fact in the summary is noticeable. The belief in Jesus Christ as God, and equally the belief in him as man, is clearly taught by these Fathers. So too is the belief in the trend of Christ's teaching as to the righteous and the wicked and as to the final day of judgment.

It is obvious that in some way thousands of men came to act as if these things were true. For them so to act was against all their worldly interests. They gained nothing but the prospect of a martyr's death by such a belief. According to all testimony it made them better men. Nor can one account for this result without owning some such cause for it as that these things appealed to them as actual facts. Some of these men could have ascertained the truth about these things from apostolic lips. Many of them felt the moral power of these facts in the deepest possible experiences of a human soul.

It would be possible for us to go onward from this age to those immediately succeeding, and to show how, with some additions, the main facts were still held firmly by the succeeding Christian communities. But our argument does not require it.

Let us now go back one step from these apostolic Fathers. The four Gospels shall remain shut. We will take only the Epistles. And among the Epistles let us take only four out of all those usually ascribed to Paul; and the four shall be those that the most extreme criticism allows to be genuine—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. What we have found in the Fathers prepares us for what we now find in the Epistles. Here is no mythical Christ "manufactured in the third and fourth centuries," but a veritable historic person doctrinally described. The doctrines are embodied in the facts and the facts in the doctrines. From such a mind

as that of Paul we may expect what we find, less of the alleged facts stated specifically and more of the facts conceived in their amazing wholeness. He compasses the grand pantology of the events. He sees what they mean, and in giving the meaning, indorses the facts without which such a meaning were impossible. There is the grandeur of high moral conception in his way of treating them. Now and then, to make a special point, he gives a few words of narration. But narration is neither his forte nor his object. He uses for spiritual purposes the events in the Christ life. Its revelation of God, who had sent his only begotten Son, and the worth and blessing of this event to men in the new relation established toward the Father and the moral power of these divine unfoldings as they regenerate and sanctify human souls—these are the points of view from which he sees the gospel.

It must be remembered that he is writing his Epistles to those who have been already made Christians by this gospel of God's grace. They had heard from his lips or from those who had repeated his message or that of his brother apostles, details such as were afterward set down by the four evangelists. In his reported speeches before hostile heathen and unbelieving Jews, as reported in the Acts, he makes all depend on the historical events which he cites. But in these Epistles—letters to brethren in Christ—he uses the historical only by way of enforcing the practical. He writes to those already aware of the

things on which their new life is based. There is a whole great implication. There is everywhere an assumption. The details of Christ's career he certainly knew. He had heard the outline from Stephen when he held the garments of those who stoned the martyr. At his conversion he saw the Jesus who had died and risen. At Jerusalem he had interviews day after day with Peter and James, and they must have submitted to the questioning and cross-questioning which such a man as Paul would give them. One can almost hear Paul as he insists on knowing the details:

> Are you sure of this matter of the descent from David? Was Mary his mother in deed and truth? Were you present when he fed the assembled thousands and did you handle and eat the miraculous bread? Did you see and know the man Lazarus and was he really raised from the dead by Christ's word of power? Were you at that first Lord's Supper in the upper room? And what were the very words he used on that occasion? Give them to me and let me write them out now on my tablets? What was the Lord's teaching about the remission of sins, about spiritual regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit? What did he say about his own coming again and about the judgment day and the final awards? Did you see him and hear his words on the cross? Can you show me others who knew at first hand about that death?

We can almost hear him as he tells Peter that the gospel and its wholeness—as a great scheme of God—had been revealed to him when he saw the Christ on his way to Damascus; but that he

wanted to know definitely and from those who knew the Christ personally the details that should fill out in his knowledge that divinely given summary of Christian fact. This spiritual side of the gospel he knew better than "Peter, and James the Lord's brother"; but the temporal side of the events, and the more minute circumstances they would know better than he. Nothing would escape this man, trained, as he was, to careful inquiry, and able to mark the bearing of each event on his own wide pantology of the gospel he so thoroughly mastered that afterward he could speak of it as "my gospel." Why has no painter seized on that most important interview and given us in his picture Paul and Peter questioning and answering each other, their faces lighted up with a glory that should show how a divine inspiration could stimulate all their natural powers to highest exercise as they speak of these great events in the life of their Lord? Think of them as they talk over the words that Peter heard and John afterward recorded, when Jesus had spoken of his disciples as "in him as the branch is in the vine-stalk." Paul caught the phrase, and his epistles show how he works that preposition "in," as believers are constantly described as "in Christ."

It has sometimes been said that the age in which Paul lived was uncritical and credulous. Doubtless in that, as in our later centuries, there were uncritical men. But it is stoutly denied that among

the class of men to which Paul belonged there was any lack of careful investigation. The special literary characteristic of the time was not credulity, but the very opposite. Men gloried in holding all beliefs in suspense. That which astonished Paul's auditors on Mars' Hill was that a man evidently educated—a rhetorician, a logician, and in philosophy the peer of any of their philosophers—should really believe something as actually true about the Nazarene of Palestine.

It is sure that the Christian communities of that day held in suspense, until the proof was overwhelming, certain books claiming to be apostolic. They made selections. They used not exactly our modern critical methods. But all critical methods worth anything are simply formulated common sense used in investigation. We hear Paul citing the series of proofs that convinced him of the reality of Christ's resurrection. And he is doing it to remind a Christian community of what they knew already, viz., "that he (Christ) was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve, after that of five hundred brethren at once; then of James, then of all the apostles, last of all of me also." Here are marks of critical care alike in the apostle and the church to which he is writing. They both took testimony, so that they might form a reliable judgment in the premises. They both ran the greatest possible risk in accepting these facts; and under the circumstances, when their own lives were at stake, nothing but a supreme love of

truth could have animated them. Mind and heart were both convinced and both compelled discipleship. Indeed, the Pauline writings are dominated by the fraternal appeal to truth about a historic Christ in which they both had earnestly believed before he wrote. Every doctrine grounded itself upon alleged historic facts. Indeed, every doctrine was a historic event in doctrinal statement instead of factual statement.

We have seen previously in this chapter what the apostolic Fathers, who kept company with the apostles, believed and taught, and also what the communities they addressed believed about Jesus. They held him to be a historic personage.

We come now to cite from the four Epistles of Paul, above mentioned, the proof that the same historic personage described by the apostolic Fathers was the Christ in whom Paul believed.

As Paul, when converted, had seen the risen Christ, so naturally he looked on all Christian fact and doctrine through the lens of Christ's resurrection. (1) He cites the fact of that resurrection (1 Cor. 15 : 4). (2) He names the ascension of Jesus (1 Cor. 10 : 16). (3) He sees Christ at the right hand of God (Rom. 8 : 34). (4) Christ will return to judge the world (Rom. 11 : 16). (5) Christ had been rich in heavenly glory before he came (2 Cor. 8 : 9). (6) Christ was the man from heaven (1 Cor. 15 : 47). (7) He was present and active at the creation (1 Cor. 8 : 6). (8)

He became poor for our sakes (2 Cor. 8 : 9). (9) His crucifixion is named (Gal. 2 : 20). (10) He was betrayed (1 Cor. 11 : 23). (11) The rulers of Israel had a hand in the matter (1 Cor. 2 : 8). (12) He died and was buried, as "the Scriptures (*i. e.*, Old Testament) had foretold" (1 Cor. 15 : 3). (13) He rose the third day (1 Cor. 15 : 4). (14) He was mortal man (1 Cor. 15 : 21). (15) He was also "Son of God" (Rom. 1 : 14). (16) Paul ascribes miraculous power to the apostles as given them by the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 7, *et al.*). (17) The connecting facts of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are cited in due historic order (1 Cor. 15 : 1 *et seq.*). (18) Paul's peculiar references to baptism show that he recognizes it as not only established, but as illustrated by Christ himself. (19) Christ's birth from a woman is named (1 Cor. 11 : 23, 24). (20) Christ's descent from David is given (Rom. 1 : 3). (21) Paul names the Lord's Supper. (22) He records, as he says he had received them, the very words Christ used in the ordinance (1 Cor. 11 : 23-27).

These twenty-two direct citations of Christian facts occur incidentally in four short epistles, which are not intended primarily to be historical, but to be doctrinal writings. Compare now these twenty-two specific references with the above-quoted summary of the teachings, not of the second class of the apostolic Fathers—these are so well known in their references to Christ's historicity that my ar-

gument does not require citations from them—but compare these with the teaching of the first class of the Fathers, who were the companions of the apostles, and the coincidence is remarkable. Certainly both are describing the same historic Jesus.

Remember too, that in these four Epistles, the genuineness of which is admitted by even the most radical of "the advanced critics," we have the earliest documentary proofs of the historic Christ. The allegation of a very prominent skeptic, as above quoted, is this: "The difficulty is not to prove that Christ was believed to be a historic personage after the fourth century, but to bridge over the years from A. D. 1 to 300." But no such chasm of three hundred years exists. We have not only the second class of the Fathers, living after Peter, Paul, and John had died, but the first class of the apostolic Fathers, the companions and disciples of the apostles. Added to these is this testimony of Paul himself in these twenty-two citations from four admitted epistles, not now to urge the whole tone and spirit of them as in consonance with the historic facts to which he incidentally refers.

We are now within twenty-five or thirty years of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Is there a chasm here? Yes, a documentary chasm; and it comes just where we have a right to expect it; just where the absence of that kind of proof is our best assurance that there is no myth or fraud. We must recall the universally conceded method of

the time. It was that a master did not himself write out his teachings. His disciples repeated them orally for years. That was their special business. To use a modern phrase, they were his "publishers." It has been claimed that Homer did not put into writing his immortal poems; that they were first repeated orally, and only in after years were they written out. The same claim is made for Socrates, whose disciples gave oral publication to his teachings at first, Plato and Xenophon subsequently setting down his words. Jesus wrote, so far as we know, no single line, recorded no miracle, but left it, by express command, for his disciples under divine guidance, after first preaching his gospel orally, to put the needed story into form, when he should have departed. Those twenty-five years were bridged in exactly the way that historic investigation of the times shows to have been the accepted method. Nor was there danger of loss of accuracy in a method necessary at that period. At Cairo, in Egypt, to-day it is said that a teacher who cannot himself read one word of the Koran, teaches scholars who are ignorant of the alphabet. And the memorizing is as exact as though read from a book published with the careful proof-reading shown by the "Riverside Press." And far within this period of twenty-five years there had been numerous "logia," *i. e.*, "scraps of narration," written out by disciples—even though the great mass of what was taught and believed was re-

cited orally. Luke speaks of this very time when he says that "many attempts had been made to draw up an account of these matters that are accepted among us as true."[1] Here we are then, right upon the events themselves, eye-witnesses testifying and their words repeated from lip to lip, while brief snatches of "the things accepted among us" are in circulation. These "scholia" or "logia" in some cases may have been copied word for word in parts of some of the synoptic Gospels. For the highest diligence in ascertaining the truth by human investigation is entirely consistent with the divine inspiration of the writers, since they would be guided in deciding what to retain and what to omit out of their abundant material. The chasm is filled. We are close upon Christ's own day.

And let it be carefully noted that the historic Christ of these Fathers, and of Paul's four great Epistles has only to be matched with our four Gospels to show the whole grand unity of presentation. Here is no "Christ first devised in the fourth century." Here is no Christ "originated by Paul"; no Christ "the conception of whom was started late in anti-apostolic period, between A. D. 150-300." Here is granitic fact. Here is sure foundation. There is no room for myth in those earliest years; no room for additions such as the imaginations of subsequent ages might suggest. And we can trace a superior wisdom in the process of guarding

[1] Luke 1 : 1. "Twentieth Century New Testament Translation."

against mistakes in every possible way. We see the divine plan for "the oral gospel" spoken by eye-witnesses and their immediate converts; then for the earlier Epistles founded on the Christian facts and breathing their moral spirit; for "logia," with threads of written statement about this or that special event in Christ's life, and these preparatory to the final writing of our four authorized Gospels; also for the later apostolic Epistles not only of Paul, but of Peter, James, and John; and finally, for the representations through broken and beautiful visions in the book of The Revelation of the enthroned Christ as he carries out from "the right hand" his work in establishing on earth "the kingdom of God." No "chasm" exists. The chain has no missing link, since each passes through and is interlocked with its fellow-link. The broad, far-seeing declaration was precisely fulfilled, in which the Master promised that disciples, after his departure, should be "led into the truth," in their subsequent records, as he should "bring into their minds" what he had said and done. If one did not know beforehand, he could not tell often whether the citation was from Epistle or Gospel, so thoroughly one are the two stories of Christ. They are of a single piece, so far as events are concerned, differing only in the purpose of the writer in either case. One of them intentionally omits and the other as intentionally inserts an incident. And the undesigned coincidences are too many and too obvious to be accounted for aside

from the integrity of the writers and the exactness of their records, to which must be added also the guidance of the inspiring Spirit of God.

Nor can we omit to mention the fact of the perfect harmony of all these classes of writers as they present the unique moral qualities of Jesus Christ. The model man of Greek conception was an intellectual gladiator; of the Roman, a man of physical powers; of the Egyptian, a mystical recluse; of the Jew, a man of either Pharisaic righteousness or of Sadducean skepticism. But none of these resembled in the faintest degree the actual personage known as "the Christ." And nothing is harder, from a literary or moral point of view, than to have various writers, each with a different aim, present the same moral qualities as belonging to one personality. And when it is done successfully, no proof is more satisfactory as to the personality of the one thus depicted. But alike in Gospel and Epistle, Jesus Christ has supreme spiritual qualities most clearly set forth.

He is represented as loving with a love for God and for man that has in it a peculiarity surpassing the ordinary human love, alike in kind and in degree. He has a meekness and a gentleness represented in Gospel and praised in Epistle, that is without parallel in one who at the same time makes claims never made by man before. He is wise not only with a knowledge of what is in the heart of man, but of what is in the depths of the divine

nature; and he is represented by evangelist and apostle alike as penetrating with his gaze both time and eternity. He is the most unselfish of characters, forgetting self in seeking to please God by his life and to redeem man by his death. Above all, he sheds over his whole career, in childhood and in maturer years, in teaching and in his whole public activities, and in his most familiar social life a certain indescribable influence as of one who had come from heaven, bringing with him the aroma of its own divine holiness. That holiness is central and only in God. He is the "Son of God." And this holy aroma pervades the whole presentation in Gospel and Epistle equally, and gives both their oneness, showing the peculiar guidance of the Holy Spirit. The historic Christ stands forth. His earthly career is depicted. His inner life and spirit are laid open. And it is all done with such completeness, through epistolary and evangelistic documents, that we are not looking as through a glass darkly, but we see our Lord, as it were, face to face.

And it is one of the chief joys of men who have long been close students of the New Testament that this Christ, so far from vanishing, as the years go by, comes nearer and grows more real; and they feel better acquainted with him than in the days of their youth. They revere and they love with distinct personal apprehension of the personal Jesus Christ.

II. The Experiential Proof.

And the experiential argument not only for the actuality of the facts, but for accuracy in the records, is to be given due place. The great object of the biblical records about what Jesus Christ was and did and said is to secure an experience in human hearts and lives in response thereto. Such facts and truths ought to produce a given result. All other objects, such as the general betterment of humanity on earth, are subsidiary, and in the end are better attained by keeping this primary object in view. What is more needed is a profound moral impression to be wrought on the deepest nature in men by which there shall be in them a spiritual apprehension corresponding to God's presentation of Jesus Christ. So then, the historic record of Christ's religion in the Bible is to be more or less completely matched by this distinctive Christian experience. The "signs and wonders" of the New Testament, popularly known as "miracles," were wrought on material nature or on the human body. The object was through the bodily senses to impress the spiritual nature in man. But what if direct work on the very substance of the soul itself is the highest conceivable kind of work? Mark and scar the earth as you will, build your structures, change as far as you may the desert to a fruitful field, but how small a thing you have done! A little time and the last dissolving fires shall burn out every trace of your work upon the physical

world. And as to the human body on which these "signs and wonders" of healing and resurrection were done, it has its doom written in its every substance. But souls, being moral, are ever-enduring. Morality is immortality; and work wrought on the souls of men made in God's image is therefore as permanent as God himself.

And here emerges the meaning of Jesus in one of his declarations in which the reality and potency of his own miracles and their relation to his teaching was set forth. His wonderful words—words more wonderful than the miracles themselves—were these, "He that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these." He could not in the phrase "greater works than these" have had reference to physical miracle. For while it was true that physical miracle still lingered a little time with the apostles, departing only when impossible because it had become useless, even then there could be no greater "miracle" of that kind than the raising of the dead when corruption naturally would have begun its foul work. Jesus did that. How then, could his apostles in his name and by his authority do "greater works than these"? The reference must have been to some higher grade of working wrought on the superior substance of the human soul. May we not claim that in this loftier spiritual realm, the work of God's Holy Spirit wrought through the utterance of Christian lips as they declare these truths

by which men are regenerated and sanctified, takes to-day the place of the old out-worn physical miracles, and that this is to us of these later centuries a more convincing proof of Christianity than would be any repetition of them. But while those physical miracles served their purpose and the record of them continues to be of immense importance for the Christian world, there is still a demand for evidence that God continues to do "mighty works." The first Christian century was a long time ago. Is there not something fresh, tangible, something that we can see and hear, something close at hand, something of present proof, as the years of this twentieth century open to us?

There is a natural craving for continuous miracle as the divine attestation of truth. All history shows it. It has been especially evident all through these Christian centuries. When spiritual religion had died down almost to its very roots, this instinctive demand insisted more positively than ever upon some form of miracle, and men expected it in the physical realm. Hence, in the Roman Church the "mass" as a perpetual miracle. Then came winking pictures, nodding statues, miracles at wells and churches, white bones of deceased saints with energy of healing in them, and all the long list of ecclesiastical devices. We may smile at the superstition. But sober, thoughtful, educated men have believed in these things. And instead of being amused, or even pitying those thus deluded, is it

not better to ask if there is not some demand in men's hearts, put there by God himself, for fresh and continuous evidence of the truth of Christianity? We claim that God is still at work among men; that he is giving us evidence in the spiritual realm; that instead of standing on a lower ground than that of those who saw the wonderful works of Christ in his temporary abode on earth, we stand on a higher plane and see "greater things than these." So that when to those old miracles we add these modern manifestations, we have an amount of evidence which should confound the skeptic, convince the inquirer, and convert the world. The old miracles are not repeated because the better manifestations take their place. What need of erecting new scaffolding when the completed building stands out in sharpest sunlight?

But what follows from this new manifestation? This: there will be a correspondence between the spiritual truth which underlies the miracle written on the biblical page and that experience which is written on the Christian soul. This distinctive biblical truth and this distinctive Christian experience match each other. The writer of these pages has elsewhere said:

> What proof have we on some dark and dreary day that there is a sun? No eye sees it. But suppose on such a day some beautiful flower were endowed with the gift of consciousness, so that it knew itself and knew also the influences that had made it what it is. It has taken in the

sunlight for many long hours and used it. It has absorbed and retained the solar rays, so that all its colors are really sun colors. It is not more conscious of itself than it is that the sun has made it what it is. Its beauty is due to what it has received. Its voice, if it could speak about itself, is also necessarily its voice about the sun, so that if your ear is sharp to hear its testimony and your eye quick to note its gesture, it says to you most impressively that there is a sun. So the Christian experience has taken up, absorbed, retained, and employed the great facts of the religion of Jesus Christ. And out of its consciousness, when we have shut for the hour the lids of the revealed word, we may learn them anew. The flower certainly exists. And the Christian experience is as certainly a reality. And when that reality is once established and is carefully studied, it becomes a wonderfully strong confirmation of the great Christian facts and doctrines.[1]

On the very face of the New Testament we have the story of a divinely redemptive interference. God's love for the world as seen in the gospel is far other than that shown by some kind-hearted judge who gives the man on trial the utmost abatement, the furthest possible allowance that justice will admit; who listens to all that makes for excuse, allows all possible extenuation, and is to the uttermost mercifully disposed. God is all that, and is far, very far, more than that. Redemptive interference in a distinctly definite method is declared in that epitome of the gospel given by Jesus Christ himself when he said, " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever be-

[1] " The Christian Experience," p. 152.

lieveth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Such facts of interference strike deep. They rouse attention. They startle the conscience. They are the subsoil plow that turns a furrow deep and wide. No man can permit himself one honest hour over that text, letting it fully and fairly into the mind and through the mind into the heart, without emotion. These facts ought to convert. They are adapted to produce in the deepest depth of any human soul, an experience of personal religion.

One part of this redemptive process is that of a new inward life. The recipients of this new life, because of the efficacy of God's Spirit in using these truths, are said to be "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "born from above." Here is the truth exactly adapted to do this work; and here is the agent to accomplish by means of it the desired result.

It is a matter of observation that this effect of responsive experience is actually produced. It is freely admitted that great outward changes can be produced by an executive will acting in the presence of a high ideal held fast before a man's mind and heart. Drunkards have left drink, gamblers have left their games, licentious men have become reformed. But the changes under these great Christian convictions are of a deeper kind and affect all the inward springs of life. The swearer is seen to leave off his oaths and to speak reverently of God, and even to pray to him. The man who had little

conscience in anything becomes now conscientious in the smallest matters—matters about which he had never before had any sense of the right and the wrong. A man was notorious for hating Christians; they are his brethren now. His life shows a heart set on new objects. Things once matters of indifference have for him now a thrilling interest. Things disliked, perhaps despised once, now attract and fascinate. New aims animate him. New pleasures are craved. New hopes wake in the soul. New aspirations seize upon him. Life is pitched on a higher key, and his thought and feeling are in a loftier realm. Another kind of world has opened before him, and he is another kind of man.

Nor is it one sex only which is thus transformed. She who was notoriously giddy has become sober-minded. She whose tongue spoke only the dialect of folly learns to sing the songs of religion, and sing them from the heart. Sometimes the very features of the face are transformed. Instead of the old, thoughtless, expressionless look, a new nobility and a high moral purposefulness stamp themselves upon the countenance and show a radical change for the better life. And in a multitude of instances this change is permanent, and this new interior life grows in strength. Temptations are resisted, and distinctive Christian virtues are cultivated until the Christian character is achieved that abides for time and eternity.

Sometimes this regeneration occurs in early child-

hood. Little contrast is possible between the old and the new to the consciousness of the child himself. Nor is it so obvious in the outward life to those not intimate with him. In such a case the contrast is to be seen between this child and some other child of similar age and surroundings. The contention now and here made, let it be remembered, is not about conversion considered with reference to any suddenness, but with reference to the years of regenerate life that follow it. Sometimes an adult is in doubt because conversion came so early; such an one cannot contrast the memory of previous wrong feeling with present right feeling. Here too, the contrast is of one's own experience with that of non-religious men all about him in the community. And in that contrast he will perceive the profound inward difference between "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

So far the appeal has been to observation. But there is the further appeal—the appeal to testimony. We must remember that there are millions of men who speak of an inward religious experience of which they are conscious as coming from these gospel facts and truths. They offer it as their own personal testimony. Something—they frequently put it in another way, saying Some One—has entered into their life vitally. They have had an experience corresponding to that so continually assumed and so often directly described in the Epistles

of the New Testament as the characteristic thing in the discipleship of those to whom those Epistles were addressed. They understand for the first time what those Epistles mean. The sealed book has been opened to them. They say that they came to feel the guilt as well as the folly of a former godless and prayerless life. It oppressed them. They felt that this wrong was not so much a thing of the surface as of the soul. They were out of harmony with their God; and the reason for this disharmony was deep down in the central self, and this central self needed to be made over. They saw that either God must change or they must change if he and they were to dwell together in his heaven. He could not change, and they, while able to do many an outward thing, could not change their deeper self. God by his gracious Spirit must do that work in them. Young hearts wanted Christ as their Friend, because they dared not venture out into life alone. Older persons, who had tried vainly to do at least a little in bending their inward nature and had failed at the task, have felt the need of a spiritual and radical change in the substance of the soul itself. Their guilt was their weakness, and their weakness was their guilt. There came to them—sometimes it came to them suddenly, sometimes gradually—the great gospel fact that Jesus Christ was the Friend needed by the youth, the Saviour needed by the adult. It was like a new revelation. The historic character of Jesus

had been a matter of merely popular and general knowledge. He had indeed been known as a model of all virtues; the ideal man. But it had been a kind of loose intellectual knowledge; a matter of some faint interest, as was the question of the inhabitability of the planet Mars. But now Jesus Christ was seen; nay, more than seen. He was apprehended as God's special manifestation to meet one's human needs; as one able by his Spirit to enter into our very souls and fulfil his promise, "I will come to you"—all this comes home to a man's own soul. It is borne in upon his individual consciousness. God is no more conceived of by such a man as the apex of a logical pyramid, but he is God entering into the deepest experience possible to man. And as God once revealed himself at the incarnation by historic interference for the world's salvation, so now he manifests himself to the individual man by personal interference. God deals with the soul and the soul with God. And the testimony of this man is that he has a new God, a new Christ, lives in a new world. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

It may be said that this sketch of experience and testimony has in mind extreme instances. Some one said at a meeting on "Round Top," at Northfield, which Mr. Moody was conducting, that "religious experiences had suffered a diminution in vividness during the last half-century." Mr. Moody admitted it so far as the opening experiences of

the religious life are concerned. But he insisted that if there was less of the sense of sinfulness at the outset, repentance was sure to come afterward, and in purer form and often with even more vividness. Again, be it said that, in our argument nothing depends upon the time of the occurrence, but that the experience itself is the thing to be noted. Bunyan's Pilgrim did not find his burden rolled off his shoulders when he first left the City of Destruction. That consciousness came when he was on well past the gate that opened into the narrow way. And it is when the experience is somewhat advanced that it can be best surveyed and the testimony best be given as to its reality.

Nor can this testimony be resolved into the memory of an experience coming from natural causes. Adolescence has been named. A period of natural moral awakening in childhood and youth has been cited as the frequent time when conversion occurs. And it is doubtless true that the child awakens to religious ideas exactly as he awakes in youth to a sense of numbers in arithmetic. But what of the vast number of those in early life who, awakening to the sense of moral personality, do not become regenerate? The regeneration claimed by millions is to them a totally distinct thing from their first awaking to the study of their own personality. Even a child led by God's Spirit has felt the need of something to change his selfhood; something lacking, as a boy said, "something that shall make

it easy to do right from within." And many a child has found that the "something lacking" was exactly met in a simple childlike and yet thoroughly genuine experience of religion. There is a delightful artlessness in childhood as it takes on trust the promises of the Bible and finds that, in the very act of trusting, a new inward life has begun. The child cannot analyze it, cannot put his testimony into language an adult would use. But the experiential result is the same, and in after years the witnessing lips can speak out of the old memory of those childhood days.

But it is from adults who, with more exact and measured speech, can tell their experience in religion that we get the testimony we would secure. They say that these gospel facts and the doctrines derived directly from them when first considered roused dislike. Seen to be important, they were, to say the least, unwelcome. In some cases there was strong opposition; occasionally a kind of bitterness of feeling, if of not actual hatred. Subsequently, after a more or less definite period, these very truths that had been distasteful were joyfully received and affection took the place of dislike. Surely, that is not the natural result of things! One might ask how long must one dislike the truth in order that, as "the natural result" of that dislike, he comes to love it? How ardent is to be the hatred in order to induce affection in a human soul?

And the testimony is this: that precisely the

same truths, through "a superior influence" exerted on the mind and heart, produced this beneficent result. That "superior influence," they say, was from outside themselves. They ascribe it to God's Spirit working upon them "to will and to do." The truth was the instrument used by the divine agent. The truth alone would have continued and intensified the dislike and opposition. Truth was poured, like light from a sun at midday, upon the Jews when Christ was on earth. They opposed all the more. The record is "they crucified him." It is true that these facts, as has before been urged, have in them a tendency to convert. So when you throw a thistle-down into the air, as it falls it tends towards China. But it will not get there. The whole diameter of the earth stands in its way. So there is a heart—and these men testify to that fact as a former personal experience—naturally unresponsive and often hard, between the truth and its legitimate result in conversion. The facts of an actual change in the disposition of the soul must be traced farther back and higher up. Truth was the fit instrumentality divinely used. But He who used it, always in consonance with the man's own freedom of choice, was the divine Spirit. And his work, through the agency of Christian men, is the work "greater than these" miracles, of which Jesus spoke.

Such is the testimony of thousands of men. And something must be done with this testimony. The

men who give it are honest men. There are too many millions of them to permit for a moment the idea of universal deception or of universal mistake. Here is an amount of testimony offered by men who have no earthly reason for making this claim save that they know it is true and that their fellow-men need to know it. Here is evidence which, unless one assumes that nothing can ever be proved by human testimony, is absolutely conclusive in this matter of inward renewal as a thing of personal experience.

But here comes the inquiry: What of historic fact does this experience involve?

It is a universal characteristic of this experience that it leads men to turn at once to the Bible as the word of God; and they do it by a kind of spiritual instinct. It is as natural to them as for a babe to turn to its mother's breast. There is the instant feeling that in looking into this volume they will find that which responds to this new experience, as face answers to face in a mirror. And they are not disappointed. It is all in the Bible, both as cause and as product. There had been the general knowledge of a few great facts for which the world is indebted to this volume. But subsequently these known facts, set home divinely to the individual soul, woke new thought and feeling and purpose. The man had hardly need to ask the source of that which so startled and transformed him. He knows where this truth is to be found.

He instinctively opens his Bible. It appeals at once to his soul. Such a man has now a key to the peculiar lock.

True, there are whole sections of the Bible that can only be understood afterward when the broadest geographical and exegetical knowledge shall be acquired. But at the very outset, how much more in the progressive study of years, there is a vitalizing touch of God on the soul by which its old spiritual blindness is cured and the restored vision sees God in the Bible. Text after text is illuminated. The throb of the new life finds answering throb in the heart of God as here revealed. God manifests himself elsewhere, but God speaks directly here, and his voice is recognized and the soul starts up in happy response. Said one of old, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." The man is in delightful sympathy with this God of the Bible. It is this man's book, and it is God's book for this very man. It comes home to his inner life. Now, it is a promise that seizes on one's heart and unfolds its benediction of sacred blessing, and then it is some scene in the history therein recorded that is apprehended on its spiritual side, and has a wealth of meaning of which the man had never dreamed. And so part after part of the volume gets itself spiritually believed; and this kind of belief carries with it the belief in the historicity of that which is of such worth to the soul. And connected with the truths thus spiritually discerned are

things up to which the soul has not reached as yet. But the spiritual mind reasons correctly when it says so many things once in darkness are now "light in the Lord," that these other things, closely connected with those now verified, are to be also verified in the further experience of this regenerate life. Things loosely held, or altogether rejected, are more easily believed. It is, as in the body, where one sense corrects and then reenforces and substantiates another. The spiritual side of biblical facts is always the main thing about them.

And this side recognized, it is felt that the merely physical side, which is only the shadow of the real substance, is demanded alike by logic and by feeling. A Christian of mature years, who has frequently listened to recitals of Christian experience, will be likely to recall very many instances in which not only biblical promises, but biblical facts, have received verifications on their spiritual side, which carry with them the confirmation of historicity. In the Christian experience detailed in the Epistles a great number of comparatively minor facts in the Old Testament are used on their spiritual side as interpreting and therefore confirming their historical reality. The "vital eye" of the regenerate man marks what the merely intellectual student, however keen, will never perceive. These are the things of which Paul speaks as "spiritually discerned." With many thousands of these spiritual verifications now known, it may be at length true

that all the biblical facts will be found in the contents of the ultimate religious experiences of Christians to have been thus used. Enough verifications have been made to warrant us in receiving the Bible as God's truth. We have not mapped out all the stars of the universe, but only enough to warrant the belief in a universal astronomy. These great moral verifications already made cover the general historicity of the Bible as a book culminating in the records of the historic Christ. On the way to the final result of a complete verification there are specific things that are distinctly mirrored in the Christian experience.

We look into it to find a personal God distinctly revealed. The God disclosed is not the abstract God of "the unknown and the unknowable"; nor the scantily conceded God of the mere naturalist—a God who is little else than the center of natural forces and tendencies; nor the God of pantheistic speculation who, since he is everything, is nothing of a God. The God seen and felt and known in the inner life of the regenerate soul is as distinctly and definitely a person as is the man himself. The Psalms, so largely experiential, make God especially visible in the consciousness of the godly man. The constant terms are "our God" and "my God." The fellowship is so intimate that there is a kind of blended consciousness, and we sometimes cannot quite decide whether in a given psalm God is speaking to his child or the child is speaking to his

God. The mirror sends back from its depths the face that looks in upon it. Make the rose conscious, and it testifies of the sun from which it took its colors. Bushnell called this consciousness "the participation of God that assimilates." It is not the merely "intellectual God-consciousness" of which certain German writers speak; it is rather a moral God-consciousness. And in it the soul finds itself verifying the truth of the grand old Hebrew seers and singers of the Old Testament in what they say about God.

Further, the mirror of the soul's experience reflects the peculiar God of the Bible in his aspect of the God of righteousness. The regenerate soul is on the side of right. It wants right done. It is glad that its God is not the bald, bare, characterless God of mere literary conception. On the contrary, character is the main thing about him. A man just coming into the religious life said, "I don't want God to do any wrong in saving me." He was smitten through and through with a sense of righteousness, and hesitated to believe that a righteous God under any circumstances could forgive a sin. The clear, clean sense of eternal righteousness was rising in this man's soul. He must have a righteous God. And such a one he found described on the biblical page. And mature, modern men, in studying for years the Bible, find that it leads them constantly to greater heights and gives to the deepest nature in them an increasing satisfaction. They see with

the vital eye of the soul the moral beauty of holiness as it shines in the God of the Bible. Holiness is "wholeness"—completeness in all respects; the blending of all excellencies. It is what harmony is in music—the perfect agreement of related sounds. No one excellence craved by the soul as it worships is lacking, and the unison of all these excellences in a perfect God is desired. Such a God, the one holy God, he finds revealed only in the Bible.

So too, the soul gets at itself in its best experiences in this regenerate life; and this also admits of verification in the Scripture revelations concerning man. Certain psychological questions are agitating thoughtful men. They are questions about reality. And they concern especially the reality of the soul. Is what we call the soul "a real thing," or only a "stream of tendencies"? Let us put this question to our personal consciousness where we can find that consciousness at its deepest, purest, and best—in the regenerate nature. There we have it nearest Eden. We can indeed reason about "states of mind as all we know," and that there is constantly a "me within us that correlates them." But the moral consciousness speaks more distinctly. It is the testimony of something deeper and more vivid and trustworthy—the central selfhood. And this personal self within is moved upon morally in response to the personal God; and it acts as only a separate person can act in this moral response. The deepest in the soul finds itself rising

up into consonance with the deepest in God—the God of the Bible. It is the personal touch of moral natures. In God's own image he made man; and into that image he remakes man. Consciousness finds power as an ultimate fact, not of matter, but of mind. We originate, and in so far are like in kind of power to God. We act on the plane of the true and the false as does God; also on the plane of the right and the wrong, as does God. Starting up in the consciousness of these noble powers, one begins to "come to himself." Now make this natural consciousness to become a Christian consciousness, and the man knows himself as having a soul with boundless capacities for joy or for sorrow.

And the Scriptures make their steady appeal, not to any vague "stream of consciousness," but to that deep selfhood morally roused in the regenerated soul. The fact of a soul is given unmistakably in this Christian experience as a parallel fact with that of God's own consciousness, which is set forth in the Bible. The soul has its moral God by virtue of being a moral soul—made originally in the divine image. There is in godly men the sense of restoration, and this is the constant presentation of the sacred volume. Conversion is the soul's home-coming to God, alike in the biblical language and in the Christian testimony. And the subsequent new life is the historicity of a soul's dealing with God as the Bible is the historical record of God's dealings with the human soul.

But the distinctive Christian experience gathers itself about Jesus Christ, and so is able to verify the main Christian facts on their moral side. It cannot give direct testimony as to the details—such, for instance, as the feeding of the five thousand. But that feeding was along the main lines of Christ's career; was seen as a fit miracle for the time, place, and circumstances; was a great object-lesson, and it stands so connected with positive moral teaching given at the time that, like the seamless garment of the Lord, it cannot be rent asunder. But the great facts in their morally historic setting are involved in regenerate experience. The soul's call is for the intervention alike of rescue and of renewal. Some moral acts are exactly equal to our natural powers; and some are as certainly beyond them. We cannot directly do these latter things. But when in physics, the load is too heavy for our native strength, we avail ourselves of the mechanical powers—the screw, the wedge, the lever. And in the matters of the soul there is need of outside help; for the consciousness of our sinful need is universal. Some few, misled by a wrong philosophy, would deny it, exactly as some few would deny bodily pain. Some few, through personal pride, would ignore it. But the exceptions only prove the universal verdict. No man can go down into his own soul and not find there need of salvation not only from sin, but from a sinful self. And the light which he carries down into the re-

cesses of the soul, if he is a fair and honest man, is the light of the holy God of the Bible. The clearer the light and the sharper the vision, the greater the sense of need.

There is manifest to him that here is call for something beyond a man's own power of self-rescue. There is call for him not to adopt a new principle, but to get aid from a new person. That rescuing person must be God himself coming to him for this express purpose. And equally the rescuing person must be human, coming not only to but into our race in the only possible way, by birth as a man. And this unique Rescuer will need to furnish a sufficient reason for the forgiveness of sin and a sufficient potency to lift the soul into a new kind of life. Hence, when this outline of gospel truth comes home to the soul, the man instinctively says, "This is the very kind of rescue and this person the very kind of a Saviour I need." And he opens his Bible anew and learns to keep it open as he finds this Christ historically and doctrinally revealed. The companionship of this Christ fills the man with delight. The soul's own personal eye sees him. He is even better apprehended than if one had lived in Palestine and one's physical eye had seen the literal Christ. The comprehensive story of that wonderful birth, that pure childhood, that dove-sealed baptism, that unique career of mingled miracle and of teaching more miraculous than any physical miracle, that infinite tenderness

toward disciples and holy indignation toward all doers of wrong, that uplook and that outlook, both of them so human and so divine, that redemptive death and that befitting resurrection, that great benediction of the outspread hands as he ascends to his native heaven—that whole perfectly finished story of the Christ commends itself to the moral consciousness of the regenerate soul with a force at least as great and as satisfying as could any most logical demonstration. "See the Christ stand!" Here is verification. Here is vivification. Here is the logic of the heart. Here is the highest of all satisfactions. The demands of the soul, far higher in grade on such a matter than those of the intellect, are met at once and forever.

It is worth while to notice how perfectly in some of the books of the New Testament the twofold form of the historical and of the experiential evidence for the Christian facts are delightfully blended.

Take as an illustration the first Epistle of John. He starts with the historic events of which he and his brethren were the direct eye-witnesses. He uses the plural pronoun "we"—*i. e.*, those who saw Jesus. But almost immediately he appeals to those to whom he is writing as the "we." Then once more he names the historic side of the facts, and he and his brother apostles are the "we." He returns speedily and settles back on the experiential evidences of the historic facts. And now

the "we" is that of the Christians who had not seen Christ in the body, but had seen him in spiritual vision. He says, "We know that we dwell in him and he in us." The word "know" is the key-word of the epistle. He says, "We know that we know." And he blends, curiously enough, the knowing of God with the knowing of Christ, and does it so often that he seems unconscious of any question that might be raised about the divinity of his Lord. He insists that knowing the one is knowing the other; and that not to know Christ is not to know God. And yet few of those to whom he thus wrote had had the physical knowledge of Jesus. This peculiar spiritual knowledge comes through an experience in the souls of the believers as they "walk in the light." Apostles and their disciples, because of experiential knowledge, "know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

Is there need of quoting Paul in this connection? His original knowledge of Jesus may have come from popular report, and from the testimony of the martyr Stephen. In those days of his unregenerate life he had heard enough about the new religion to hate it. And it was over a very few known facts that the great persecutor became the great apostle. Subsequently, he saw Peter and James for fifteen days and obtained from them what they knew so well about the details in the life of the historic Christ. And yet further on in Paul's career he conceived of his Christ doctrinally. But

at length the historical and the doctrinal yielded in his mind to the spiritual conception. So that in all his Epistles his constant testimony concerning his own belief and that of his brethren has reference to Christ as the experiential Christ. And the tone is always, not that of a man who has something new to say to believers about Christian fact or doctrine, but that of one who assumes that those to whom he is writing had apprehended Christ through this Christian consciousness. Only by the experiences of personal religion can the great mass of mankind come to verify the Christian facts. It was intended that our religion, having indeed a foundation of substantial and well-proven facts for the head, should make its appeal where most it is needed, *i. e.,* to the heart. So that the plainest man may know by experience of personal religion that the Bible is reliable in its great facts, and that these carry with them the historicity of its Christ. Recognition is by the heart as well as by the head. But one may not neglect either without loss. The Bible, addressing both, finds in both its response.

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE AND ITS MORALITY

THERE was put into the hand of the writer some time since a book intended to show that the Bible was defective in its morality. Passages of the Bible, taken from various parts of it, were cited. Deborah's ode and portions of the Psalms were given which, it was said, breathed a revengeful spirit. Portions of Deuteronomy and Leviticus were also quoted as belonging to the Hebrew code of laws. And these, it was claimed, were not only obnoxious in statement, but were almost barbarous in their severity. Incidents of personal history were also named as immoral in tone and extremely objectionable in language. It was said that some things were unsuited for reading in the family, and that no minister would use them as a Scripture lesson from the pulpit. It was insisted upon that "these things ought not to be so much as named in a holy book such as the Bible professes to be."

But a Bible with a historical department in it, that did "not so much as mention" any sin or expose any evil might be a good enough Bible for some other kind of a world, but by that very omission it would be no Bible for such a world as

this in which we live. The Bible must name evil, that it may denounce it. It must record certain events in order not only to exhibit their wrongfulness, but to show how God is constantly outworking and overruling all things for good in the end. And as to the objectionable words in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, it should be noted that they occur in what may be called the law books of the Bible. In such books vices and crimes must be defined, that they may be forbidden; they must be particularly described, and the very language has to be unmistakable. They are not reading for very young people any more than are the "Revised Statutes" or the "Criminal Code" in our American law-books of to-day. But those laws should have a place in biblical records, for they are, with new adaptations to modern conditions, the basis of the jurisprudence of the civilized world.

As to the alleged severity in the Hebrew law-books, the comparison of them with the lately discovered "Code of Hammurabi," king of the Amorites, will show the superior mercifulness of the Hebrew code. As to the taste that condemns some of the biblical language as offensive, it may be said that tastes change almost as rapidly as fashions. They feel the literary, social, and religious trend of the changing centuries. And this matter of taste in the use of descriptive words is of great significance as showing that the books were written in the respective ages to which they lay claim. These words,

not now indeed used, seem to show the "water-marks" of their time. Homer would omit some words were he writing to-day. But it is a source of delight to those who study him that he used often the plain blunt words of his own time. Our Shakespeare only a few centuries ago used descriptive words that he would not employ in this century. Taste varies with the times, so that a mode of speech delicate at one time may be offensive at another. Nevertheless, in ancient documents we want the literary flavor of the age in which they were written.

As to some of the psalms and Deborah's ode, it is to be said that they are the strongly voiced war-songs of their time; and belonging to that peculiar kind of literature, are to be judged, as are war-songs of our own age, with that fact in view. They are the genuine report of the state of national feeling at the time when composed. And we must also remember that in these imprecatory psalms the psalmist speaks not so much personally as officially. He voices the verdict of the civil judge. For the nation was a theocracy, *i. e.*, a government in which God was not only the God of the religious life, but the civil ruler—the one who ought to execute the penalties of the law. The men against whom these psalms fulminate such declarations were deemed the enemies of God. As to the Canaanites, Israel's foe in the land, it was war on both sides to the death. No wonder the language

was strong; was even bitter. The underlying feeling that throbs through the words is that in national affairs a bitter injustice demands a bitter civil punishment.

It may be asked, "How about divine inspiration in such cases?" The same question is asked about God's providences as seen not only in war, modern as well as ancient, but in pestilence and in earthquake. To shut God out from all that has a tinge of evil in it is to shut out God altogether, in our thought and feeling, from the world's rulership. The literature of these things is no more objectionable than the fact of them, the story of them than are the evil events themselves. Only let it be noticed that such literature has its limits of age and time. One would not justify the language of an imprecatory psalm if written to-day. It suited a former time. And one can justify the moral indignation at heathenish hatred and abominable cruelty—compared with which the severest psalm is almost merciful. The historical story of such events is to be judged of in quite another way from that of the literature found in a doctrinal epistle. The poetic mood, alike in writer and reader, differs widely from that required in the composition and the study of the Gospels or the Acts. Each form of inspired literature has its own method and its own principle of interpretation. One must put himself in the place of the writer to interpret correctly; and above all, must see what God was especially

teaching men at that time in permitting such events to occur.

Men who have passed on through various moods of mind and under various experiences in life can testify to the usefulness to them of portions of the Scriptures which did not once commend themselves. Doctrines of religion, taken on trust because found in the Bible, have proved to be sheet-anchors in time of storm. Expressions in psalm and prophecy that seemed almost startling at former times have been none too strong at subsequent periods to express moral indignation at terrible outrage and inhuman wrong. And men have been glad to have inspired sanction for the utterance of fit words of the strongest possible condemnation for abominable iniquity. There may be verses of the Scripture up to which a man has not come in his experience as yet.

One form of the morality of the Bible is shown in its treatment of bold, bad men. They are not set up for imitation, but for abhorrence. The Bible does not go out of its way to find them. When it has to meet them it knows them. It transfixes them as with a dart. It pinions them to the wall. They hang there for the gaze of the generations. There is no mistaking the Nemesis. Nay, it is not Nemesis, the wrath of the avenging deities, but the pure white indignation of a holy God that brings about the punitive result. The wicked man prospers only for a time. He spreads himself "like a green bay-

tree." But soon when sought "he cannot be found." Nor is evanescence all. Judas "goes to his own place," and Jesus writes his eternal epitaph: "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

And the faults of good men are exhibited in this honest mirror. Some men with reference to some special thing are called "perfect"; but the limitation to the particular act shows what is meant by the word. The good men are good about the matter under discussion. No man has outgrown the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us." The objector, quoting the deception of Abraham and the impatience of Moses and the incontinence of David, says, "These are your good men and they are guilty of scandalous sin." But these men are never put forward as models in all virtue. Enough for the purpose of the writer, if they have a single prominent excellence. There is only one model man. David is called a "man after God's own heart"; but it was only about one thing and at one time that this commendation was given him. The results of his great sin are seen on the sacred page. They followed him all the rest of his life. Men reproach David's memory who forget how he reproaches himself. In the Fifty-first psalm he moans and sobs out his penitence until every sensitive soul in the world pities him. And this psalm bears witness to the austere morality of a Book that will not screen a man who, though in the main

a good man, is guilty of a great sin against God, against his brother official, and against the whole nation of which he was the head. But it must be remembered that but for the strenuous honesty of the Book the world at large had never known of David's sin and penitence. This Book is a mirror, and it reflects faithfully the mistakes of good men as well as their virtues. The Book is perfect in its record of the imperfections of its best friends. This is the sublime austerity of the highest possible morality.

There is the further inquiry concerning the absolute morality enjoined and the relative morality practised by the men of the Hebrew State. After the establishment of the nation there was a State religion. But national religion, the keeping of feasts and fasts, the observances of holy days, and especially of the Sabbath Day, the exact ritualistic worship of the temple, the whole sociologic arrangement—was made very prominent when the people entered Canaan. By degrees the people came to think these things the all of religion. Sin was the transgression of ecclesiastical law and was more a matter of sociological and national than of personal wrong. There were indeed some who saw the spiritual requirement in the law. But most of the people gloried in nationality, and served God, as far as they served him at all, on the sociological principle. And yet even in that old collectivism one great fact stood out prominently. It was the

conception, the constant recognition, of God. In the book of Leviticus after nearly every command we read, "For I am the Lord, thy God." And this God's one characteristic, to which all his attributes and all his perfections did obeisance, was his righteousness, *i. e.*, his eternal and unchanging sense of rightness. The Hebrew nation was to do right not only because it was right in itself, but more especially because he commanded it. It was to do right because he had supreme regard to the right. Such a God worshiped—and the God worshiped in any age becomes a model—there was evermore before the Hebrews the infinite model of all possible righteousness.

And the appeal went out, through Hebrew voices, to all mankind to do right. It was assumed that all men knew that both right and wrong exist, and that there is a fundamental distinction between them. And the recognition of this essential distinction is shown not to depend at all upon the civilization of an age or of a nation. The axioms in mathematics are the same for the boy in his first arithmetic and for the advanced student in the calculus. Pure mathematics and applied mathematics, however, do vary, since the application is probably always somewhat imperfect. In the application of pure law to imperfect men living in the imperfect conditions of human society, there appears often a wide chasm between the right itself and the extent to which it is seen, and when seen,

acted upon, even in the case of those who want to know and do "the right." The prophetic religion in Israel was always far in advance of the popular practice of it. There was high requirement, but there was a scanty degree of obedience, as is manifest in the historic facts of the national life. It is the lofty commandment, not the disregard of it, that is to be considered in any estimate of the unique biblical morality. What special things are right in given circumstances is always a question in casuistry to which honest men may give different answers. This, however, instead of disproving the reality of "the right in itself," only certifies more strongly its existence by setting men at work in seeking the just application of the principle itself. If "the right" were a set of rules for the outward life only, then the matter would be easy. But the right is a set of principles to be applied individually. It follows that "the right thing considered only as an outward act" varies with the occasion, with the amount of knowledge, and with the capacity of the man. It is affected by the personality of the individual and the degree of civilization and by the popular estimates of the age in which the man lives. Many an act done by a good man in the early biblical ages we should sharply condemn today. Were the man living he would condemn such acts as earnestly as we are wont to do. His principle of doing "the right," as he saw it, gave him one course of resulting conduct in his own day. It

would insure very unlike conduct, were he living in our own times. Remembering this very important consideration, we are to let our light be not a little shaded before we allow it to fall on the men of former times. And this is especially true when we come to judge men of the past who are depicted in a book so honest with the faults of good men as is the Old Testament.

But as the centuries go on we discern progress in the morality of biblical characters. Their aspirations are Godward. Steadily their conduct grows more consistent with the eternal principles of righteousness. And thus God was able to use men, even though they were imperfect, since they were right at heart. He had his man when some special attribute or perfection of his nature needed to be presented to the world. When men were swiftly advancing in a special virtue he could use them, and when deteriorating he could still give manifestations that met the existing need of judgment. And yet, taken as a whole, there is a significant advancement of morals parallel with advancement of religious knowledge and experience. Recalling the acknowledged fact that in our own land only one hundred years ago certain questions of outward morality were seen in a different light from that in which we now regard them, we can look with a modified gaze on the outward morality of the good men of two or three millenniums ago. "Essential right" has never altered, but "applied

right" is ever in process of advancement in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Few studies are more instructive than that of the processes through which good men in any age have come to clearer views of righteousness as it stands in God's mind. His method seems to be not to work through the mob, but through the man. He calls out the individual from the mass and then uses him for the good of the people. He has worked through great personalities. Such men he has employed to gather up the broken rays of his single and separate revelations and focus them on a given moral issue. He has had his man who has lifted in his name the moral standard as against an existing evil. True in all history, this is especially true in the story of Israel. God has had men who were prophets, not only in their predictive words, but in their utterances before the people. And they have spoken as in the direct presence of God. They have declared the eternal principles of righteousness and insisted that men should apply them more and more fully to practical conduct. Isaiah with trumpet tongue, Jeremiah with his infinite pathos, and Ezekiel with his inspired visions are still bearing their testimony to mankind in favor of righteousness. And the story of these appeals given in the Bible is proof of its high standard of morality.

The Scriptures, moreover, contain wonderful biographies of thoroughly good men. It is as if one were passing through a vast picture gallery hung

on every side with portraits of illustrious souls of whom the world was not worthy. Sometimes we have the full-length portrait, sometimes an outline etching; but in either case the picture is distinctive. You know the man by his characteristic excellence. A friend of the writer has a great admiration for the genius of Napoleon. He has filled the shelves of his library with volumes about him, and the walls are hung with his portraits. He says that he knows every trait of Napoleon's character and the varying ambitions of his eventful life; that on hearing any sentiment attributed to Napoleon he can judge correctly whether he did or did not utter it; that the gestures of the hand, the upward or downward corners of his mouth, his way of carrying himself in camp and in court, are all familiar to him. This knowledge has brought Napoleon so near to him that the separating years seem to depart, and he almost feels that the great military hero is alive to-day.

Somewhat so it is to those who have spent years in studying these great moral heroes of the olden time. They live in one's thought and feeling. Each has his own excellence. Each filled his own place. Even when only a stroke or two of the limner was given, each stands out in his own personality. This one shows exceeding loveliness of character, another exhibits a noble courage. Here is a man of heroic endeavor and there a man of patient endurance. In every case it is a life lived in the light that shines

down upon man from above—the light of that God who had given the man a work to do. Together they make up a galaxy of glory in the moral firmament. The eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is the roll call of the holy dead. Each man is cited as an example of faith—faith in the nearest of God's promises. And that faith showed what each would have done had the historic Christ been presented; and so they were all accepted of God as if believers in Christ. And thus, through faith coming into the kingdom of God, there was given to each some single virtue in the realm of righteousness to exhibit to the wide world of mankind.

It is also a remarkable thing that the Bible furnishes the needed moral dynamic. Ethical rules have abounded in all ages. Men have always known better than they have done. To get them to *do* is the great thing. To furnish them impulse in right doing is the problem. Motive is needed. The engine on your railway is a model as a piece of mechanism. But unless you can fire the heart under that boiler and send the steam through those iron veins and set that piston in motion, your splendid mechanism will not move a rod along the carefully laid rails. The Bible tells how to bring about this needed moral motion. It reveals a Person once living among us, and still living for us. When he left us he promised a spiritual force as a dynamic —and that force he called "the Holy Spirit." As Christ had come into human history, so this

Spirit was to come into the human heart. Taking the truth as given by Christ, the Spirit was to generate through it, a new life in the deepest depth of the believing disciple. The dynamic was to upheave. Old foundations were to be destroyed and new ones laid, and on them a new structure built. This work was, after Christ's death for remission, the one thing needed above all else for the individual man; and then, through the multitude of individual Christians, the whole wide world, socially, politically, and religiously, was to be blessed. And with the revelation of a holy God, a holy Christ, and a holy Spirit, through the pages of the Bible, that volume must necessarily be of the most exalted morals.

CHAPTER V

THE BIBLE AND ITS METHOD

A GENTLEMAN of large leisure and of literary tastes, who had read many books, and among them occasionally his Bible, gives his general idea of the book on this wise: "It seems to me that the Bible in its Old Testament is a collection of Hebrew pamphlets and poems, and the New Testament a collection of biographical incidents about Jesus Christ, and also of stray letters incidentally written and accidentally preserved. I do not recognize any literary plan that has been carefully followed out."

This gentleman was something of an architect. He thought and spoke in architectural terms. He judged of the Bible as if it were a building with its foundations well laid, its basement set on those foundations, and the structure rising story above story, according to the blue-print the architect puts into the builder's hands. But he was altogether wrong in that he did not see that the Bible was not modeled after a structure made by man, but rather was like God's work elsewhere, a growth—a growth as from a seed, up and on through germination, through stock and twig and blossom and fruitage. Man's way is to build a dead thing; God's way is to make a live thing, with power to

grow. And this growth is the underlying idea of the whole volume. In studying the Bible you have not a problem in mechanics, but you are in contact with something that has in it that mysterious thing we call life. Its own definition of itself is, "The word of God is quick," *i. e.,* alive. It is alive with mental and moral life.

Other methods in which God might have communicated his will are certainly conceivable. But his chosen method here, in consonance with all his higher workings elsewhere, is to be carefully noted, in asking for the plan of the Bible. It has no resemblance to the building of a palace, but rather to the progressive stages in the growth of the plant. So too, we must remember—as my friend above named did not—that worthy literature is always a growth. And for God to fail in adapting himself to this obvious law of literary life when making a book for men and through men, in which he was to reveal himself would be unlike all we know about him. He could have given a book consisting of truths to be believed and of rules to be practised. But that would have been a creed, or at most, a series of ethical rules, but not a Bible. So given, it would be unlike anything else God has ever done. Such a method—perhaps possible—would have been at the very first glance suspicious. Let us be glad of the method that permits growth in events that reveal God; and growth also, corresponding to human progress, in the literary art, so that under

divine guidance these successive manifestations can be duly chronicled. Had God revealed himself all at once—so to say—at the outset of human history, immediately after human sin, he would so far from being understood have been completely misunderstood. The revelation would have dazzled and confounded. Too much brightness is darkness to the human eye. The God of the Bible had his plan here as well as in nature. He laid out the work, seeing the end from the beginning. The Old Testament and the New Testament could not change places. Neither has completeness without the other; together they reveal God.

I. God's plan is that of a progressive revelation and of a progressive record of it. We have a book recording a series of connected and advancing revelations about the God it names in its opening words. "In the beginning, God." And from the first verse to the last it never loses sight of him. The first chapter of Genesis is an evolutionary chapter. And the evolution is God's evolution in his manifestation of himself. He is the one who plans and executes. There is not a trace of that materialism that finds "a resident potency in things to evolve themselves." In the great prologue of that first chapter of Genesis a single statement covers God's creative activity. And there follows instantly the story of specific acts—always in a progressive series. God is represented as changing chaos into cosmos. He starts

life. He introduces successive kinds of life. There is constant unfolding of plan. Sometimes by steady growth, sometimes by vast convulsions, he reveals his thought, afterward to be studied by the interpretative mind of the man whom he would create.

Presently human literature, spoken and written, begins. Then comes the unique method of God. It is to employ the successive forms of literature that men should use through the ages. The story of Genesis has the peculiar aroma of the age in which it professes to be written. Its author, evidently aware of both Babylonian and Egyptian theories, has access to the scattered monotheistic traditions of his Hebrew ancestry. He may have had scraps from an age even then so remote as that of Abraham. And we are permitted to believe that the God who had ordained this progressive revelation of himself and his doings among men would not permit the story of it to perish through lack of fit record. If it was worth while to order the events, it was worth while to order the story of them for the benefit of the coming ages. The whole procession of these events would have significance as long as the world should endure.

At once, after these primal revelations were made, the worship of God began. And the story traces the continued unfoldings and the successive recognitions. When we pass out of the era of the early annalists as collected in the earliest books into the time of statutory enactment, there is the

use of new literary forms. The older aroma gives place to the newer fragrance. Then come sketches of civil institutions and ritualistic requirements, and the story has again the mannerisms of the more advanced age. The literary methods are as unlike to those of Genesis as they are to our modern historic methods. The point of view is unchanged. It is still the history of God's self-revelations. But new names of the Deity, drawn from the new facts of history and from human want and supply, appear on the historic page. The growth in event and in record is for the most part steady. But as in nature, so it is in the more direct literary revelation; the regularity sometimes is interrupted. There are eras of special moral activity. Neither geology nor revelation presents an absolutely unbroken continuity in development. We have to own in geology "special eras." We must also own that in revelation sometimes more spiritual progress is made in a single century, both in the matter revealed and in the manner of its record, than in any that preceded or followed.

II. God's method of giving a revelation permits him to use the various methods of Hebrew literature. The "Psalms of David" and those classed as "Davidic," because if he did not inspire the original theme, his own songs supplied the model, were of special value in a very distinct form of divine self-revelation. In them God speaks to man and

man to God, and so intimate is the communion that often it is hard to tell which heart is more open to the other—the heart of man to God or the heart of God to the heart of man. Sometimes the two meet in the same verse, and the soul is so near to God that it seems almost to do as does a weary bird when it nestles quietly in the hand that gently holds it.

Exceedingly unlike to the literature of the Psalms is that of the "wisdom literature," as found in such books as the "Proverbs." The human author of that book seems to have culled the wisdom of the ages. He took the chief portable wisdom of the wisest of the ages, as men take ore from a mine. He stamped it with his own superscription and then issued it for circulation in the currency of the wide world. He found the proverb a shrewd saying of merely secular wisdom, but he left it a religious utterance to be used by all the generations of living men. He found it only a dead morality—a mere tombstone epitaph; but he gave it resurrection and put into it an eternal spiritual life and made it teach the whole human race that the "fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." And in every age there have been men whose attention has been detained by those proverbs as by no other book in the Bible.

Even dramatic literature is pressed into religious service. Founded upon actual fact, most likely, in the books of Job and Jonah, we have teaching thrown into the dramatic form of question and

answer, of assertion and response. And noble conclusions, as historic facts are set forth by personages who occupy dramatic situations, are drawn as to God's care over individual life and as to his tender mercy to men who repent and turn to God.

And here in these two books, dramatic in form, we may not for a moment overlook the fact that these are a part of a volume which is professedly a revelation concerning God rather than a history of man's ideas about God. The history given in Job and Jonah, like all the rest of the Bible, is that of God in his dealings with men, and not merely that of man in the natural development of his religious ideas. This latter thing is merely incidental to the main plan and object of the Bible. Biblical history is not the history of man's opinions of God, but of God's historic revelations of himself. In the Old Testament the constant affirmation is that these things were done "that they might know that I am the Lord"; and in the New Testament, after reciting the Christian facts, it is said these events occurred, "that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The humanly "historic method" must not be suffered to displace the divinely historic method in the biblical literature.

The whole line of progress, not only in the events, but in the story of them, is especially remarkable. Not a single historic book can be spared from the biblical collection. Certainly we need the Genesis;

and the Exodus, with its central fact of the giving of the Sinaitic law, must not be omitted. And the details of that law as applied to civic and social conditions which are given in Leviticus, we could not spare. And this is fitly followed by Numbers, with its story of the forty years of the results of that legislation and with the narrative of the wanderings and the entrance into Canaan. Deuteronomy, showing God's moral purposes in all that had preceded, occupies its appropriate place. Joshua and Judges tell the political and social and religious history of the stormy time which compelled, at length, the establishment of the kingly rule of Saul and David and Solomon as told from different points of view in Kings and Samuel. These historical books are the background making intelligible the psalmist's songs, the wisdom literature, and the prophecies that, if they touched immediate times, had for their ultimate object the heralding of the coming Christ. And the interdependence of the Old Testament and the New is abundantly shown in the book of the Hebrews. The Gospels give the Christian facts, the Acts show the facts applied, and the Epistles tell the results in the Christian churches to which they were directed. We have no chance collection of rags and tatters, unmethodical, unrelated, irresponsible. Alike in Old Testament and in New there is steady progress unto ultimate culmination. Using all the forms of literature known in its times, there is in every part of the

volume the witness to one completed scheme, one pervasive thought, one distinct purpose; and there is absolute success in gaining one desired end. Thus the Bible comes to its grand culmination in the story of the Christ himself, told in its outer narrative form in the four Gospels and in its inner form of divine doctrinal meaning in apostolic Epistles, thus furnishing a volume to which, under penalty named in the book of Revelation, nothing can be added and from which nothing may be taken.

And this method of growth in biblical revelation suits itself to the child in his growth up from his childhood. A child is born—as God would have every child born—in answer to prayer; and this child is ushered into a home, the whole atmosphere of which is religious. Almost before the watchful parents are ready for it, the child begins to ask about God—"who he is," "what he is," "where he is." Your child is a born theologian, and never in any world will he cease to theologize. It is sometimes proposed to keep all theology—*i. e.*, knowledge about God—away from children and "to teach them the virtues of justice, kindness, truthfulness, etc., until thirteen to eighteen years of age." But your child cannot help asking theological questions that go to the very root of things.

Nor is the plea of worth that he cannot understand these things so well as the simple virtues. For while you may use the words "kindness" and "justice," the application of these virtues to practi-

cal life is often one of the greatest difficulty. What is "right" in a given case, what is "justice," what is "kindness" in certain circumstances? These are questions in casuistry that often puzzle an adult. On the other hand, you can teach a child religion—the love of God in sending Jesus—and the young heart has its response. Helen Kellar, imprisoned for years in her blindness and dumbness and deafness, as soon as communication was established through her teacher with the world of mind and she was told of God, declared that this was what she had known and wanted to have put into language for her. Your child was waiting at a very early age for this truth about God, and he seized it with avidity and rejoiced in what you told him about God. You began with your boy at the Genesis story, "In the beginning, God." It is childhood's first lesson. At that point the boy gains his first foothold in a series of perpetual ascents Godward. He goes on to the next step, and the Bible is his guide. The "heaven that lies about him in his infancy" drops down upon him gracious influences, as rain on the tender herb. As he advances, he meets the claims of God. He accepts them in happy choice of God for his Father, Christ for his Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, speaking through the written word, for his guide. He goes on into maturity of life, in which he is continually enriched in his progressive knowledge of God. Ripening years add to his apprehension of the divine revela-

tion; and having reached the summit of life, he descends on the westward and heavenward side, looking onward to the world where they study evermore these continuously progressive revelations in the light of the countenance of God.

Between the childhood of the individual and that of the race there is a certain degree of analogy. But even Professor Le Conte has warned us not to press the comparison too far. More and more, the theory of twenty-five years ago, that the primeval man was a savage, is disputed, and in some quarters is stoutly denied. The savage is found to be a degenerate, with the race memory of former and better days. The primeval man was undisciplined and was untaught, save for that primal teaching of God which was a necessity to his physical and intellectual and moral existence as an actual man. His moral ideas and those of his immediate descendants may have been crude. Physical expression of those moral instincts essential to any manhood was his only way of giving them voice. He was necessarily a natural anthropomorphist; *i. e.,* he conceived of God under the forms of expression derived from his own physical body.

And the Bible story represents him as doing exactly that thing. Some men to-day are not a little stumbled that in the Old Testament God is represented as if he were a vastly strong man. Your boy begins just there. He asks the universal boy's question, "Can God make a stone so big that he

cannot lift it?" In the childhood of the race God is represented to men as laboring and then resting, as cooling himself in the evening air, as smelling sweet odors. The anthropomorphism necessary in the early race is exactly met by that of the record in the early Bible. Our great adjectives omnipotent, omnipresent, etc., would have no significance. Even in our twentieth century, the most advanced man has to use terms derived from man's body or mind or soul in speaking of God. Nor are these ways of speaking derogatory to him. Man "made in his image" furnishes our best comparison when we would rise to the apprehension of God. The whole Bible in its later as well as in its earlier books makes God personal. There is the degree of parallelism that necessarily belongs to moral beings. Men do moral work up in God's plane of the eternally right. There is steady progress in the nomenclature. New names for God are found as the moral history of mankind advances. But the old way of speaking continues. And men must use it constantly in prayer and in praise.

And it is easier to do so when we mark the new emphasis given to the immanence of God. He is in all events. He manifests himself in the ordinary and in the extraordinary. And so as men connect him with the biblical events as well as with all others, the transition is less marked from the common to the uncommon, and even to the miraculous events recorded in the Bible.

CHAPTER VI

THE BIBLICAL CHRIST AND HUMAN THINKING

A GOOD man once said, "The philosophy, not only of former ages, but of this age as well, is not friendly to Christianity"; and he quoted for proof the words of Paul, "Beware of philosophy." But Paul himself was of philosophic mind. He saw things in seeing the reason for them and the relations of them. He was always deducing principles from facts. And had the good man above quoted read the whole verse, he would have seen that the philosophic apostle was warning men against "philosophy and vain deceit," *i. e.*, a vain and deceitful philosophy. It is true that vast libraries of philosophic speculation have been gathered, and that the mass of them may have had some little truth amid a great amount of error. And in view of these old philosophical theories, often absolutely contradictory, St. George Mivart, in a late volume, asks the questions, "Do we know anything; and what do we know for certainty?" And he answers by declaring that all we do know or can possibly know rests on our assumptions. But those assumptions are necessary, are universal, and instinctive. As there can be no other, so there can be no better basis.

Let us see how certainly *philosophical thought* in its rightful processes, so far from "landing us in the nowhere," really leads us to One who meets all the highest demands of the human mind and heart.

We have to assume self as a real existence; to assume also that self knows self as knowing self—self both subject and object. In the act of knowing self, self knows also "otherness" in things and in persons. But this is so given as to admit of reasoning about it and of using also the experience of self and others. We assume in our personal consciousness the integrity of our own powers of mind, and we make also the mental assumption of the integrity of our senses. We assume a connection between the two, though admitting that they possess utterly unlike qualities. But how this is, though centuries of discussion have raged about it, we have to confess that we do not know. We simply accept the fact. So that personal consciousness is the basis of all we know.

Self finds, by looking into self, certain "states of mind," or as some call it, "a stream of consciousness." But there is a self that sees and recognizes this "stream of consciousness," and can reason about it. And this self that sees and knows these "states of mind" we may call, when it is acting in one way, "the mind," and when acting in another, "the soul." On examining this consciousness we find in its contents certain instinctive laws

of judging. We did not make them. We did not put them there. We found them there when we came to know ourselves. They are standard laws by which we judge. We find there, as self is examining the contents of self, a "law of the true and the false"—a standard in our very selves which we did not make and which no man put there. We can make nothing to be either true or false. We can only recognize it as such when it agrees or disagrees with this standard in ourself. We find another law. We did not make it. It was in us. It is "the law of the right and the wrong"—a standard by which we judge of moral acts. We found also by this consciousness a singular executive force belonging to us, popularly called "the will." It is the mind itself in the act of starting something—a power wholly unlike the power of seeing and judging of "the true and the false," or the power of judging of the "right and wrong." Certain other convictions we have naturally; among them the sense of "freedom," and this working together with a sense of "obligation." Both of them we felt had the extension and both the limitation of man's sphere of ability and action.

This sense of obligation we did not start; did not subsequently put into ourselves. It was instinctive. It was not like physical obligation which we can neither refuse nor alter. It was moral obligation—the deep and abiding law of the soul, the law of duty. We began to see that we were in soul

born into this realm of things exactly as our bodies were born into the physical world, and had to consent or refuse to do our work under this law of the soul as under that law of the body. Where did all this moral world of things originate? The origin of a thinking being must be a thinking being. Some one started this scheme of thinking according to "the law of the true and the false." Some one started this moral "world of the right and the wrong." Some one must have given us the interpretative mind and soul, ushering us into his own sphere of things, and fitting us in some measure to interpret him. If there is a true and a false, there must be somewhere a Standard Mind. If there is a right and a wrong, there is a Standard Soul—*a God*

So too, in the executive domain—popularly called "the will"—we found, in thinking this thing through, that the only power we know or can conceive of as originating anything is will, demoniacal will, human will, divine will. Will starts something; starts all things. So that when we see anything started, any process beginning and going on, we do inevitably, naturally, and instinctively say that somebody is at the basis of all this. Some cause in will produced this effect. It is the instinctive belief in what is called "the law of cause and effect"—the adequate cause for such an effect—a law pointing always to the great First Cause, the original Personality standing at the head of the

physical world that surrounds us, and of the mental world and the moral world within us, and so about us and above us, and of which we form a part.

To summarize our argument: Given, in any one man's soul the slightest distinction "between the right and the wrong," you have a moral being. Given a moral being, you have a moral universe, which in its very nature dominates every other conception. Given a dominating moral universe, you have a God whose chief distinction is that he is a *moral* God. Such a moral God must be conceived of as making moral manifestation. And the highest moral manifestation we can conceive of is through some manifested personality.

Just here, one conception of modern evolutionary thought joins issue. Fascinated with the idea of cosmic unity all apart from moral purposefulness, some would make the *order of the universe* to be a veritable God. Order, they say, orders all. The universe is a machine in correct motion. Sun, moon, and stars are keeping time. The barrel-organ is playing properly its constant tune. But after a little while this conception wearies. This very constancy, this unvarying uniformity, this adamantine process without mental interference, this evolution not according to will, but by "self-resident forces inherent naturally in things themselves"—this unbroken continuity of operation begins to oppress the mind and heart. It is, however, obvious that one—just one—clear instance of discontinuity, and this whole

scheme of atheistic evolution is forever confuted. But discontinuity is certainly to be found in ten thousand instances. If I hold up this sheet of paper on which I am writing, between the sun and myself, I make discontinuity as I intercept the sun's rays. Sir Oliver Lodge and William James insist that discontinuity shall be recognized. There are unity and plurality, interlacing and interference, interaction and separation, evolution and revelation, continuity and discontinuity, agreement and discrepancy, oneness and specialty, the joined and the disjoined, the one and the many. The monist and the pluralist have here their endless debate. The monist *assuming*—it has to be an assumption, for no man can know all the facts that "have been, are now, and ever shall be"—assumes final if not present unity. Pressed by the facts of evident discontinuity he says that unity is going finally to conquer diversity. But how does he know? On the other hand there are those who contend for manifoldness against oneness. But since man is not omniscient no one can say of himself that diversity shall at length conquer unity. Meanwhile both of them exist side by side. But see the unmistakable inference, viz., there is no possible room for interference in the continuity claimed by the atheistic form of evolutionary theory. Only theistic evolution—some good men prefer to call it theistic *development,* since the term "evolution" for so many minds carries with it the atheistic conception—only the theistic conception of evolution

can solve the problem. God is evolving—evolving the true conception of himself. A God, and he a moral God, with moral purposes and moral ends in view from first to last, carrying on orderly processes when he shall choose to do so, and yet interfering with his usual habits of doing things and using both the unity and the diversity, must be posited, or there is no philosophy worth the name. We must hold to a great unity of events leading on and up to a personal revelation by some such person as the biblical Christ, and at the same time we must hold to a great interference through some such advent as the Bible describes. And just so far as the modern man, perfectly conscious of the modern spirit, shall recognize in his philosophy of things and events, the biblical scheme, including as it does the ordinary and the extraordinary, he will let go of that ordinary materialism which sees only physical fact and law, and equally will he decline to accept the ordinary idealism which sees only conceptions as the finalities, as well as the "pragmatism" that looks away from first things and actual causes and holds all things in flux, and he will welcome the one only broad theory—that of a moral God who is ever a God of moral design, ever manifesting himself morally, whether along the lines of ordinary activity or by the thrusting in of special interference.

Certain attributes could be disclosed by created things; but the real selfhood of God requires other

selfhood of the grade of moral and intellectual being for manifestation. Inspiration of prophet and apostle would by no means exhaust the possibilities of divine manifestation. These could be but anticipatory and premonitory. They roused expectation. Men watched and wondered. By such inspirations the way was being prepared for the one supreme manifestation of "God manifested in the flesh" in Jesus Christ. The need would not be met by any supposed being partially God and partially man, and so only a monstrosity. The only possible fulfilment of these foreshadowings, the only satisfaction of these needs, is in the personal Christ. The philosophic conception of our mental and moral powers and processes could not alone have taught us the amazing fact. But they teach us the need of such a fact and that there is in us a preparation for it. And when once the fact is given us in human history that there is such a Christ, we see afresh that these intellectual and moral faculties are anticipatory and prophetic of such a Person.

Christianity is Jesus Christ. Christianity is not a theory, though men have had their theories of Christ in the long processes of human thought; not a creed, though creeds have been gathered from his teachings which, as derivative and explanatory of them, are worth our study; not a morality, though morals never before had such breadth and depth and heighth, and above all, never before had

such stimulation; not a philosophy or a philanthropy, though these may be warranted deductions from his words and deeds. It is just this—no more, no less, no other—Christianity is Christ as the manifestation of God, for the needs of finite and sinful men.

There is in us as men a certain aptitude for such a Christ as the fulfilment of an ideal. There is, indeed, a peculiar completeness in the idea considered simply as an idea. Things have led up to the conception. In such a case the ideal demands the actual. The mind requires it as an ultimatum. Psychologically, we are so made up as to work swiftly and with a good degree of accuracy along this way toward a realized expectation. Taking the various lines of thought and feeling already noted, it might be well argued that some such being as Jesus Christ ought to be. It may be that he is only indicated at first. But he is next shown to be especially needed, as well as very widely expected—the desire, in their best moments, of all men. He would explain so much that calls for explanation, harmonize so much that otherwise were left in discord, bring to consummation so much that has moral prediction, fill up the void that is almost a yawning chasm without him, would gratify both mind and heart, would set at rest so many universal questionings by utterances which only such a manifested God could make, would come so near and so beneficently to our very selfhood, that the logic of his possibility would not only make us ready to

receive such a Christ into our mental and moral life, but go far toward being a proof that he is an actuality. At the very least, it may be urged that there is a preparation for accepting one who so exactly meets an ideal completeness. And the perfected idea gets its perfect satisfaction in him. He leaves nothing further to be gained. He fills the horizon. In him we have arrived. The manifesting God has fully manifested himself and man has found his Ultimate. For man, such a Christ would be "the starter and the finisher of faith"; for God he would be "the express image of his person." The eternal fitness of things would find its consummation. In such a Christ the mental and moral conception of God appears as meeting the mental and moral conception of man.

Many think that the belief in a God is not so self-evident as not to admit of the consideration of the evidences of his existence that he has himself furnished us. Free to consider, we are free to decide about it; and so there is the moral responsibility that does not belong to our reception of an absolutely self-evident truth. There is such a thing as "the will to believe" in a moral proposition. It is the same with the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. There is an immense moral aptitude. The idea of such a being befits our moral convictions. He ought to be. He is the realization of the highest moral ideal. There is preparation for him in the very constitution of our minds and

hearts. But here too, there is the place for personal moral action. We choose whether to give room to the almost instinctively persuasive. We choose also whether we will consider the arguments and weigh carefully the proofs which God gives that he has sent Jesus into the world. There is moral responsibility for believing in God and also for believing in Jesus Christ, as there would not be if the belief were a matter so self-evident that no argument about it was needed. So too, if God and Christ were mathematically proved, as a sum is proved in arithmetic, there could be no moral worth in the belief. But when we let the moral nature that sees the need of such a Christ have its free action, then we can fairly consider the proofs and come to the decision. Mood of soul, as well as carefulness in weighing the evidence, is essential to fairness. Christianity—we repeat it—is Jesus Christ.

I. Jesus Christ is a Person. He is not a myth. No such myth was possible at that New Testament time. The myth theory had for a short period some currency. It is dead and buried now. So too, the idea of imposture is gone; and equally the idea of mistake. The latest theory—and since all other theories of unbelief have had their day, it must be the last—is that of inaccuracy in the details amounting to untrustworthiness in the historians and prophets of the Old Testament and in the writers of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

But the alleged Christian facts are far within the circle of credible history; and all the world accepts other historic facts of lesser importance chronicled at the time these New Testament records were made. The age in which it was said the events occurred was a critical age. The reaction from myths had set in. And historic fact was required by the Roman spirit everywhere prevalent. The science of evidence had come to be as well defined as it is to-day. It was an age since which not a hair's breadth has been added to Euclid's geometry; an age still studied by men in our colleges as the Augustan Age; an age of highest attainments in sculpture, architecture, and literature; an age careful, exact, not overcredulous, capable of correctly weighing evidence, of making decisions upon facts and of transmitting the account of them to succeeding generations. Aristotle, the master mind in logic, had lived—the teacher of all the generations in the methods of orderly thought. The world was able to know and to record what it knew. The basal facts are an incorporated part of human history.

And the place of the alleged occurrences was as significant as were the people and the time. It was Palestine, the very central land of the older civilization. On the one side of it were Egypt and Ethiopia, at one time the most renowned of lands. Babylon, Nineveh, and India, each also distinguished at successive periods of ancient history, were on the north and east. Subsequently, in another direc-

tion, were Greece and Rome. All done in a land so situated was done in the eyes of the whole world. Near-by Phœnician mariners sailed the Mediterranean. And through that Palestine the great caravans with an immense inward commerce were obliged to pass. It was for its central situation the coveted land of all the surrounding nations. No other time than that time, no other land than that land, no other people than that people in all the long past, could furnish superior opportunity for such a personal revelation of God.

Nothing now and here is claimed save what all admit, that some such person as Jesus Christ has lived. And what we want to do at this stage of our inquiry is to examine the world's thought of him, exactly as we have examined the processes of human thought in the preparation for him.

It would take us too far afield to go over historic evidences. Nor does our scheme of thought require it. Enough that the Gospels and Epistles be regarded as giving some general account of One who has not only notched the calendar of the foremost centuries and given them his name, but who ideally represents all virtue in the minds of their thoughtful and spiritual men.

He is a Person. He has human nature. The speculation that he had a human body, but that the place in us occupied by mind and soul, in him was occupied by God himself, has so long gone by that it needs not to be confuted. Enough to say that

in such a being there could be no human nature like our own, and so he would have failed in manifesting God to us. A superangelic, and for the same reason a superhuman being, would not meet the case. Just there was the mistake of the pagan mythologies in which God came into the body of fish, of beast, or of bird. But only as one comes into the human race by the same gateway of a human birth as we all come, can he fully manifest God and also have the needed influence upon us. He only can become our brother man by being born into the race of mankind. Jesus Christ evidently belonged to that class of personalities who have an intelligent and moral nature and so are veritable men. And the genuine man, as well as the actual God, is needed for the full idea of a divine incarnation among us.

The tendency in human thinking has been toward the belief in some such incarnation of God in our whole nature, body and mind and soul, as that claimed by the New Testament. Full manhood is required, since man is the highest form of created being that we know.[1] And it would be strange indeed if the God whose great aim is self-manifestation to man, after selecting so many inferior objects for his partial revelation, should have passed by absolutely perfect human nature as his consummate method. That he used men, though they

[1] "Thou hast made him a little lower than God." (Ps. 8 : 5, R. V.)

were imperfect, in the long preparatory centuries, is indicative of the line in which incarnation would come. But when we remember that God is a Person, and man is a corresponding person, thus sharing a certain intimacy, because of kind of being, then we may begin to understand that both the God who seeks to reveal and the man who is to receive the revelation, will crave the highest possible form of it through the whole human personality. The surpassing instance will be a Christ who is God becoming man. The case of some holy prophet or apostle filled, as far as such a man possibly could be filled with the Holy Spirit, will not meet the conditions. For basally, such a person would still be a man, and only a man. That could only be an indication, not an incarnate consummation. It is God reaching down that is needed, rather than man reaching up. Prophets and apostles may be men inspired of God, but no one of them is a God incarnate. And human thought has always made this broadest of distinctions.

It is true that now and then a man of some eminence has urged us to regard the inspiration of Jesus as the same in kind as that of the best men, though greater in degree, and has defended the position with philosophic disquisition. But the great current of human thought has required something widely different; and the shrinking of the best men from the imputation to themselves of such a thing is significant. Jesus the person is another

sort of being. A true man, he is also more. Here is not only immanence, but transcendence. Somehow, by means of the story of Jesus, the whole ideal of moral being has been lifted in human thought; and, yet, an important fact—the best men of the race have never felt that any one has reached that ideal save the Christ himself. He claims to have so done. Evermore he transcends. And so it comes about that the most consummate expression of the manifestation of God of which we can conceive lies along this direction—a transcendent incarnation. All the preparation of the ages culminates just here. When the idea of such an incarnation dawns on the soul of a man it is the rising of the sun after midnight darkness. When it dawns on the soul of the ages, Christianity is recognized as that which so meets all our needs as to carry its own evidence as sunlight carries evidence of a sun. No other thought is comparable with it for a moment in its height and depth and breadth. It fills the horizon of human thinking. It ought to be true. The human thought of it ought not to be greater than the divine reality of it.

And it is just this—the amazing grandeur of the conception—that has awakened objection. So little a world as ours among "the universe of worlds upon worlds" seems far too diminutive to be the theater of such an occurrence. But that is to confound the physically small with the morally large—as if one should confound a man's body of a certain

number of pounds avoirdupois with the weight of some vast mountain range, and forget that within that human body is a soul that can know, while the whole vast mountain range cannot know itself nor know the man who knows it. One thought of a thinking mind transcends in grandeur a whole physical universe. And if God's one great thought, comprehending every other, is that of holy self-manifestation, and if man's highest preparatory thought is along the same line, then the strong natural presumption is in favor of this incarnate manifestation. It is not too great a thing for God to do; and man is great enough to be profoundly moved by it. This kind of incarnation meets and fulfils all Jewish prophecy; meets also the deepest pagan prophecies which expressed so much of the natural want and hope of untold millions. And yet—singular fact—it disappointed the misled generation of the Hebrew nation which did not expect at that time such a Christ, and so far from receiving him, crucified him; and disappointed as well heathendom, which in that age hoped for a solely physical salvation by a solely physical deliverer.

But if the great bulk of popular thought in that century when Christ was born, expecting as it did some kind of a Revealer, had missed the better conception, a few of the most spiritual souls in the world had been prepared to receive the true Christ. Something similar to that rejection and also to

that reception has occurred ever since the Advent, only that increasing numbers have had the spiritual apprehension of the spiritual Christ. A unique experience in such souls, gathering at first about some single event of Christ's personality, has made fact after fact in his revelation of himself more and more convincing. It has been a process with them —a morally logical process—the most certain and convincing kind of evidence that any man can possibly have. A Christian experience coming alike to head and heart and changing the whole interior and exterior life, not as the result of a philosophy, but of personal contact with Christ as a person, is a fact as certain as certainty itself; and it is the resultant fact of a sufficient cause. If the deepest and most certain thing is personality, and if we are so made up that our own personality is touched in its deepest depth only by another's personality, then this Christian experience of the soul's spiritual communion with its Christ is the most morally reasonable thing that we can ever know. And all this involves a personal soul and a personal Christ. The highest and broadest spiritual endowment, carrying with it all in the man, meets the highest conceivable revelation of God in this unique Person. It is man at his utmost meeting God at what, so far as we know, is likewise his utmost.

It is sometimes urged that this is not a universal experience. Of course not. No such thing is claimed for all men; but only this, viz., the ca-

pacity of all men for becoming through this experience "the sons of God." Jevons has said, "Of the scientific method the first law is that whatever phenomena is, *is*. Let us investigate those instincts of the human mind by which man is led to work as if the approval of a higher Being were the aim of life." Psychological fact is the most convincing of all kinds of fact. And here is the double psychological fact of a series of historic occurrences, having in them immense moral potency for accordant souls; and right over against these physico-moral occurrences about an alleged Christ are men having their deepest nature more profoundly stirred, elevated, enlarged, and satisfied than by anything else ever experienced. Here is distinct psychologic actuality, involving the highest Being and also the best classes of men. And the story of the Christian experience of the soul's contact with an ever-living Christ is a testimony that no fair student of human thought and feeling can afford to ignore.

It may be objected to this line of thought that this experience in human conviction does not carry with it necessarily the idea of an absolutely divine Christ. May he not be some supernatural personage, less than God and more than man? Precisely this objection is urged against the proofs of the existence of a personal God. But moral reasoning on moral questions, such as the existence of God and the absolute perfection of Jesus Christ proceeds as accurately, though in a different way, as does any

mathematical reasoning. Moral proof is largely moral trend. It is the satisfaction of the heart in its best impulses. It is discernment through the exercise of moral vision as it sees moral necessity. It has its moral axioms as sure as those on which in geometry the whole science depends. There is a feeling of satisfaction in the soul as well as in the intellect. And it is as fit that the one should be gratified as the other. It has its own demands, and asks corresponding fact and knows when that demand is met by the requisite fact.

Now, here is the corresponding fact: that this best moral thought which requires an absolutely perfect being finds its requirement made good in the person of Jesus Christ. There is one stainless person in all human biography. In all the old centuries the foremost ethical teachers had endeavored to draw the picture of a sinless person—and failed in every case. And yet certain plain men have done in the New Testament what the most skilful literary and moral artists of the world have not been able to do; and they have done it without possessing any special genius, themselves incapable of inventing all the various situations in which they have made him absolutely perfect. The question is a fair one when we ask if they could have done it had there not been One who lived this absolutely sinless life?

And there is the further question whether, after gaining the conception from seeing this perfect

Person, they could have depicted him without an aid that was no less than divine. They portray no namby-pamby personage, no weakly optimistic man able to see only good things and say only pleasant words. He has moral stamina. He is no monk, retired from an active career; no ascetic, no untried, inexperienced man. He is no man of insipid goodness. In a wicked world he was not wanting in holy wrath against confirmed evil-doers. He had moral indignation, the pure anger of a holy soul against evil. In a perfectly holy being the hate of the wrong must be exactly equal to the love of the right. He saw men defiling the temple; he used the whip of small cords as a scepter, and the defilers needed no physical compulsion as they saw his indignant eye and fled. He met, and so he must denounce, impenitent hypocrisy. When the disciples needed the object-lesson, he withered more fully the already blasted fig tree; and they learned that moral unfruitfulness is moral death. Let no man object to such teachings in a perfect being, especially when one considers that these denunciations of wrong-doers are always connected with promises to those who will leave the wrong and seek truth and righteousness. The chapter of Matthew's Gospel that rings out the strongest condemnation to one class of hearers, ends with the tenderest invitations to the heavy laden to come to him and find rest to their souls.

And it is in this complete poise of Jesus that we

find his perfection. It stands not alone in the completeness of single virtues, but in virtues related and balanced as they are seen when drawn out by those he meets in his eventful career. But his own consciousness of his perfection is remarkable. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" is his challenge to his hostile hearers. Every other good man is known as a penitent over daily mistakes. Confession of sin becomes every other person. Repentance is the first duty; the prayer for forgiveness is the first true prayer of any true man. But here is an unrepentant man, who never shows consciousness of sin in any word he utters; who never owns a mistake; who never expresses a regret. All these confessions and contritions he requires of others; and good men require them of other good men, as well as of themselves. But the moral thought of the world does not require them of Jesus. He never repented. And yet no one accuses him of pride, of egotism, of lack of doing the right thing because he does not fitly repent. The moral thought of the world is satisfied with his omission of the very first virtue out of which all other religious virtues in men naturally grow. There are things in which he is not a model, because he is more; but where he is model, he is perfect. And in the way in which he does things that are not for us model acts, he is always the model in the mood of mind and soul in which he does them. Human thought has demanded, but human thought did not

make the perfect Christ. Blindness in part had fallen on the nation and the age in which he appeared. It was an age distinguished for literary achievement, for careful legal discrimination. It was the age of Greek philosophy and of Roman jurisprudence. It could weigh evidence for an alleged fact as well as our twentieth century. Virgil sang, Plato had reasoned, and Euclid gave the world a geometry so perfect that nothing has been added to it since his day. But it was an age as dark morally as it was bright intellectually. And the conception of such a person as Jesus was not found in any nation on the planet. The Hebrew Scriptures contained it in outline. But Jewish thought, in just that particular century, had hidden the light under the bushel. The prophetic intimations were not simply misread; they were perverted. The leaders were "blind leaders of the blind." Roman thought, just then, was absorbed in the idea of world-wide dominion. Its only Christ was a mightier Cæsar. Greek thought was poetic when not philosophic, and sought beauty in all forms save that of the deep moral "beauty of holiness"—a beauty of which the Greek had no conception. But just in that peculiar age there came One who did not meet its superficial expectations; a being of another model, of another kind.

But whatever the surface thought in any man or in any age, the great human heart beats the same in us all. Deep calls unto deep. The permanent

demands of a soul as a soul are not satisfied by any ritualism in religion or any speculation in philosophy. These demands are the broadest and deepest that the human soul thoroughly awake to its needs can ever know.

And they are all exactly met in one Person. Not only flawless, but perfect in character toward God and toward men, he stands out claiming in turn the recognition of all human thought in its largest moral requirement and expectations. He combines successfully the virtues widest apart and harmonizes the greatest moral contrasts. He is "Son of man," and he is "Son of God." And here too, in this amazing breadth of being, he exactly meets the demands of the best moral thought of the race. It is not by solution. We cannot solve the question of how such a being can exist any more than we can solve the equally difficult problem of how God can exist at all. Intellectually there must be, ought to be, will always be, mystery about God—and equally about Christ. But our practical thinking, when the soul within us thinks its deeper thoughts, requires the "Son of man"; and none other can suit it in those moods. In others of its moods it requires none the less that the Christ shall be the incarnate "Son of God." Subjective thought here meets objective fact. The human soul finds the New Testament Christ.

It is also to be noted that the requirement is for a perpetual Christ, so that there shall be no man,

however distant in time from the age in which Christ lived, to whom this Christ cannot come. This requires omniscience on the part of this Christ, that he may know each man, however distant or obscure. The earthly career of Christ in a human body, it is said, terminated at a definite time. It has been asked why, if he was to be the perpetual Christ who should meet the want of humanity in all the long ages, he did not continue after his resurrection to live among men. But what would have been gained for the eye of the body would have been lost for the eye of the soul. He could not in a human body like our own have been other than a localized Christ. Listening to one man on one continent, he would have been deaf to another's voice on some separated shore. The historical Christ for one age, he needed to be the spiritual Christ for every age and for every man. But divine attributes go together. The omniscience of a perpetual presence needs the omnipotence of one who can fulfil a perpetual promise. For him to have been simply a superhuman being, higher than man, lower than God, would have met no single want of man's deeper nature. He would be unlike us. We could not apprehend him at all. But because he is one of us, the purer our human thought the more complete the apprehension of the perfected character in Jesus Christ. To men in the uttermost ages and in the uttermost of their moral wants, this Christ makes his appeal of similarity of being. He

offers both human and divine sympathies and satisfactions. The unchangeable Christ is able to meet the demands of the successive ages of mankind—"the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And so here again, in this very important respect also, the subjective in human thought meets the objective in the perfect Christ.

In still another way Jesus was the perpetual Christ. Perpetually the idea of him stood in God's thought. And God's thought of him had been reflected with more or less distinctness in the mirror of human thought. The divine idea sought expression and the human idea expected to find it somewhere expressed. In physical phenomena we see always an idea from the world of mind descending and seeking embodiment in the world of matter. In spiritual phenomena we see the same tendency as God is manifesting himself in the human being composed of body and soul. And the principle holds good in historic as well as in personal phenomena. All the noblest men in dim heathenism and in Hebrew monotheism are anticipatory. The great lawgiver Moses, the great prophet Elijah, with their companions in Hebrew revelation, are so many morning rays lifting themselves in the eastern sky and betokening the sun which was to rise where the Christ should come. The prophecy is in the men themselves as well as in their words. The perpetual anticipation found its fulfilment and the long preparation found its complete and happy fruition

as Jesus, the Christ, met all the conditions. And what he has been he will be. He cannot change in all the coming ages. There can be no presence more permanent than that of him who is able to "save unto the uttermost" time.

Moreover, Jesus Christ has met the requirement in human thought for vitality in religion. When once spiritual life has been communicated, ritualistic forms may have a certain degree of moral worth, but they can never be the substitutes for life itself. To put them in place of life is to make a conservatory out of paper flowers. And even the splendid moralities of exact and upright conduct can content the man only partially. Alone they are the statue which no art of the sculptor can make to live. The marble will not belie its own silence. Its eyes of stone and its lips of stone, however cunning the work of the artist, are only stone eyes and lips after all. When an unassisted man is the sculptor of his own character, he is liable to judge of it with the utmost of partiality, and to be proud of the supposed moral worth of his achievement. But the great heart in man will not long remain without uttering the cry for genuine life.

But life, so says all science, comes only from life. It has to be communicated. Look at the human soul. See how it is organized for spiritual uses. Its powers are adapted to a kind of life that is larger in quantity as well as higher in quality than the merely natural soul life. It has the nat-

ural soul life, *i. e.,* the existence of faculty, even when wholly under the dominion of evil. What is needed is a new spiritual communication of the highest kind of soul life; the life of God in the soul. There is often a sharp and painful sense in men of the need of a deep-down spiritual life; a life in the center of all thought and feeling; a life that is of the same moral kind as that of God himself. The faculty for this new kind of life—let us call it spiritual life—is in every man. The niche is there, left by the architect, but it is often unfilled; the capacity exists, but it is unused. There is in the better moods of human thought, in those moods that are nearest the normal in their insight into selfhood, the consciousness of a wrong vitality. Human literature in its sanest utterances makes the confession of this "spot of deadness" in us, as a thing so certainly true that a man has only to utter a cry of this regret, for the great universal human heart to recognize the fitness of the utterance. "Create in me a clean heart," cries a Hebrew poet. A Roman poet sings, "I see and approve the better, but I follow the worse." And there is also the well-known saying of Epictetus, "What he (man) wishes he does not do, and what he does not wish, that he does." And Paul's personification of the universal man is familiar, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh"—my merely human nature—"dwelleth no good thing." And again he speaks, after his Master, of certain men as spirit-

ually " dead," and then of these same " dead " men as " made alive " spiritually. The deep and earnest thought of the ages, alike in Christian and in heathen literature, is at one in these confessions. There is a part of our human nature that is unresponsive, just as the dead tree is unresponsive to the spring shower or the summer sun. But it is a kind of deadness for which we all feel responsible. It is the soul standing, as it were, above itself and looking down into itself and discovering blindness where there should be vision; deadness where there should be life. It is as if a second self which sees were calling to account a first self, because it does not see that it is dead to what it ought to be most alive. And the question comes, is there anywhere a touch that will give moral resurrection? Is there anywhere a soul so alive that it can impart its life to another soul? That is the great demand.

And right over against this experience of deadness there is another experience. It is that of life. Untold millions of the human race claim " the Christian experience." Something has come vitally to them. Psychologically it has been described as the coming into their minds of a new and opposite idea—a new dominating thought that controls the whole inner and outer life. They have experienced " the expulsive power of a new affection." But to these persons themselves the psychological conception does not express the whole fact, since it omits the recognition of personality. So too, some would

express this experience in terms of "the philosophy of self-negation," *i. e.*, the getting out of self. But is there anything harder than for self by itself to get out of self? Goethe's idea of "the over-soul" and Carlyle's much-lauded "scorn of the wrong and worship of the strong," and Emerson's "power of culture" have all been invoked to explain the undeniable phenomenon of a new force at the center of a man's being, acting, as it were, dynamically. And yet to make the better part of one's own self a god is no less an idolatry than to make the baser; and in neither case is there the actual "going out of self," which is the thing so much commended. But, on the other hand, the men with this new experience of a new interior life have a distinct apprehension of a new power from without acting upon and within them. Once dead, so far as any fit response was concerned, toward their God, they have a new spiritual life, divinely communicated. They ascribe this communication to a person. They say that he has come into their personal life in its deepest depths. The new life was not the natural result of a process. Rather it started a process. They testify that God, through his Son Jesus Christ has come into their inner life; and they affirm that this has been more than their own resolve to imitate a good model, but that it is the experience of a new vitality from the touch of another soul. They say that the soul who has thus come into touch with their soul is God.

But just here comes a reluctance on the part of some men of large and deep religious experience to use the terms which others venture to employ when they speak of "the God-consciousness." God is so great with a far-away greatness that it is no wonder some men shrink and hesitate. Nor are they helped by any emphasis on the divine immanence. So too, the invisibility hinders. There may be the worship of a profound reverence. But to many the nearness and the communion seem, at the outset, to be too familiar. They do not dare claim it. But shall God veil himself for them? That would be further hindrance. If, however, God shall reveal himself in becoming man, that would indeed be the overcoming of all reluctance. That would be a transaction in human history bridging all the distance; that would be an objective fact corresponding to a subjective need. The Greek in the early days of Christianity met the advances of the new religion by the strong plea that the doctrine of the one only God was unsympathetic. Above us, away from us, with the concerns of vast worlds on his hands, he had other work to do than that claimed for him in coming into the personality of each man. And so the Greek urged that his own gods were gods who dwelt on every mountain and in every valley; that not only was the air and earth and sky filled with his innumerable gods, but that there were household gods for every humblest dwelling, and that a god was always near and his image

was always visible. True, the Christian might answer that an almighty and omniscient God must, by the very definition of him, be never wanting in nearness. But the believer in the one God who was forbidden to make any visible image of him, whatever logic he might use with the Greek, could not overcome in the minds of other men the feeling of invisibility, of distance, of isolation, of a greatness so great that the one God would seem unsympathetic to the mass of mankind. Happily, however, the Christian, in his objective Christ, had an additional argument; had a mighty historic fact in reserve, and with it he could vanquish his Greek opponent.

One section of ancient religious thought was almost fiercely monotheistic. The Jewish nation held to the one God who was declared to be both transcendent and immanent, *i. e.,* over and in all things. But at times, for certain men, this immanence was unduly emphasized; and so it engendered then, as now, in other than Jewish thought, that tendency to subjectivism which in the end leads men to worship and even to pray to the God within one's self—a step reached in certain milder forms of "new thought," in which a man unconsciously makes himself a god, and thinks that communing with his own self is the same thing as communing with the one self-existing God.

But if the idea of the Essenes in Christ's day had been due to wrong emphasis on the immanence

of God, there was also the fruit of a wrong development from an excessive emphasis on the divine transcendence. The people ever since the worship of the golden calf at the foot of Sinai had craved some visible emblem of God. Spiritual worship was hard to be maintained amid surrounding idolaters who had statues of their gods cut in wood or stone. The statue soon came, in that age as in every other, to be no more a symbol, but the very god himself to the worshiper. Hence, the constant interdiction in the Hebrew Scriptures against idolatry. The Sinaitic command, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," was repeated age after age, to correct the constant tendency to idolatrous forms of objective worship. Carefully guarded were all the ritualistic requirements of the Hebrew religion against this danger of slipping down from the worship of the spiritual to the physical. The altar even must not bear the name of Jehovah graven on it. And so through Hebrew history the two tendencies strove for the mastery.

But gradually the people came to understand what all this restriction on the one side and on the other was intended to teach. A new objective fact was to occur. In their own land and among their own people there was to be a real and objective visibility. It was not to be carved in stone. It was not to be a material thing. It was not to be a temple. It was to be "greater than the temple." A new Person was to appear. He was to be a

man—and more. The one "Son of man" was to be the one "Son of God," in some coming happy age. A great bow of promise bent athwart their whole sky. There would be no need of a physical idol; no need of the soul's worship of itself. Transcendence and immanence were to be both perfectly given in this coming One. He was to be "the light" not only for "his people," but "for the Gentiles." No such person had ever appeared. No other such person would ever be needed after he should come.

The primal promise was of a "seed" to be seen germinating through the long centuries of Hebrew literature. There were preparatory theophanies, each an advance upon its predecessor. They indicated that a Person was to be born who, according to one conception, should be a Deliverer, according to another a Messiah, according to yet another a Saviour. All great and beautiful nomenclature gathered itself about this "coming One." Heaven and earth could not furnish enough of the grand and the glorious and blessed to prefigure him. All language was exhausted in the effort to describe him as the visible Revealer of the invisible God. And it was by this conception, so deep and abiding, of a coming Person, that Hebrew thought was kept from disobeying the prohibition against constructing any graven image of Jehovah. The subjective feeling unless it has objective reality inevitably reacts, and its God becomes merely the philosopher's god

—a thought; or the scientist's god—a law; or the monist's god—one's self. In none of these conceptions is God the life-giving God who comes home to men's souls; the personally objective God who can touch with the hand of a divine alteration the deepest springs of human feeling and make the man "go out of himself" in the noblest of all conceivable spiritual life.

See now how Jesus Christ, and he alone, can rectify all these errors, can meet all these needs, when he is revealed as "the Life."

He comes as an actual Person into the physical, intellectual, and moral life of the race. He exactly meets in this respect the demand of human thought. He is not angelic nor is he superangelic. Such a one would not compass the conditions. He is a man. Only as he comes into the race by the gateway of a human birth can he be a man at all. Jesus is born. No better way for his coming can be conceived of even by the broadest imagination than that described briefly, chastely, tenderly, positively, in the New Testament story of the virgin birth. The two evangelists who, from their chosen point of view and from their object in writing, should be expected to describe it are represented as doing so. And equally the two who, from their different plan and purpose have omitted it are the ones whose Gospels would have awakened suspicion had they inserted it. The marvelous childhood, so unlike that devised for the Christ in the spurious gospels of

the second and third centuries, but so perfectly blending his obedience to his mother and that to his God, has attracted the thought of the whole race. And the teaching of his mature years, coming not from the study of the world's masters in ethics, but surpassing them all, is the true outcome of his own spiritual life. And this is his mission, to start the same kind of life in other souls. He, a person, teaches the deepest secret of spiritual personality. Much of what he says is of the directly personal character. He discourses of himself as he is related on the one hand to God's self and on the other hand to the deepest self of those to whom he speaks. "I say unto you" is his constant utterance. He puts religion in the soul. He says it is a "birth from above"; he urges that men must be "twice born." But being born is entrance into life. And he, coming from above, proposes to give this new kind of soul-life as out of himself. He came "that men might have life, and have it abundantly."

Very striking are Christ's utterances about "life." There is an intensity in his use of the word that we must not allow to escape our notice. To a company of opposers he one day said, "Ye have no life in you." There could have been no reference to their physical existence, for they were in vigorous bodily life. Nor yet was there any reference to their mental existence, for they were addressed by him as those capable mentally of understanding his words. And he could not have denied their moral

existence, for they, like all other men, were in possession of an ethical life that is indestructible. What Christ said on another occasion may explain his meaning. He said, "I give unto them eternal life." Had he meant to stir them into moral action on the plane of their natural ethical faculties, he would have urged them to personal moral exertion. But he speaks of bringing to them and giving to them something that was originally his own, but was bestowed upon certain persons as "believers" in him. He will plant in them, as seed is planted in the earth, a new principle that is far more than any mere natural exercise of their natural soul faculty. It is a potency using the capacities of the man in a new way and in a higher sphere of things. It is designated as "newness of life." Those who receive it are described as "partakers of the divine nature." It is said Christ is "in them"; and this can only mean, not our poor imitation of him, but his indwelling in us. Assuming everywhere that the intuition of immortality was in men, he spoke of a kind of immortality—the immortality of the holy soul—as alone deserving the name of "life."

Among his other utterances on this matter of the one holy, immortal life, which he conceived of as beginning here and now and as extending onward beyond this world, he said, "This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." In that age—and the world has similar ages—there had been a kind of

religiousness that was merely imitative. It had asked for models. It had its ideals to be copied. So paper flowers tied on wire stems might be stuck into your carefully prepared flower-bed. They are skilful imitations of genuine flowers. They are ideally perfect in form and color. They must, indeed, be kept from the rain; for the rain that nourishes a true flower reduces your paper imitation to a mass of pulp. They must be kept from the sun, or the color fades. So there is a religiousness that talks always of ideals. Among men in Christ's day, the ideals were the Old Testament worthies; among men in our day the ideal may be Christian saints, or even Christ himself in his outward life. But such imitation apart from something deeper is just the paper flower on the wire stem. The true flower grows from a root and produces a stalk and leaf and blossom. It has its own inward life. Time was in the old geological ages when all the soils of the earth were just soils, with all potencies in them for the vegetation of the whole world; but there was not an atom of actual vegetation. God thrust in life—vegetative life. And lo! tree and shrub and all the widespread verdure of the world. Souls in like manner have their potentiality. And into them can be thrust a new spiritual life. This is Christ's work, as the life-giver. And when he does it, then potentiality becomes actuality in a spiritual sonship of God.

Vitality is the greatest human need in religion.

And this idea of imparting a true inward life was the special presentation of Jesus Christ to the world. It was his one thought about which all else gathered. One need not have any belief in the divine inspiration of the evangelists; he need not regard their work as of other authority than those of ordinarily fair historians to recognize the great emphasis Jesus put on this idea of life. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. . . giveth life . . . shall have life everlasting," are a few of the many utterances of like import ascribed to him; and he crowns them all by saying, in true character with all his words and deeds, "I am the life." And the life in him is communicable. Splendid statuary is found in many an artist's studio. "Make it live; it does everything else," said a critic to a sculptor, as he stood before the finished statue. "Ah," was the reply, "would that I could; you ask what only God can do." But human faculty and human thought has this capacity of being divinely kindled into spiritual life. The representation that makes Jesus use so constantly the preposition "in," when speaking of his relation to his disciples, is remarkable. He is to be "in" them as life in the vine-stock is communicated to life in the branches of the vine; "in" them, as food is in the body of which it becomes a part; in them as vitally as God was in him—all this is the constant tone of his teaching, and it is not true of the utterances of any other teacher who ever stood on the planet.

Indeed, it would be felt as disgustingly egoistic in any other person; but it awakens exactly the opposite feeling when Christ says all this about himself. The evangelists could neither have invented nor depicted such a conception of a communicated moral life. Jesus spoke in accordance with his whole character and teaching when he said that he was "the life of the world." He is not speaking of the lesser and lower fact that he was to give a model for man's imitation. But he is going to bestow a kind of moral life—the kind that is central in God—upon men. He is going to do more than to come near. There is always a little film of air between the palms that are pressed closest in friendship. He comes nearer than that. He is to be the Christ "within you." And all this is worse than insensate in a claim so constant that, if we know anything about him he certainly made it, unless we take his teaching, in the way he evidently meant it to be taken, as expressing the closest possible relation, his actual coming into one's personality, and that not in a way to destroy, but to enlarge it. One of his apostles expresses it in this way, "Christ liveth in me." And such words are the fit words about him who called himself "the life."

Moreover, he made this peculiarity of the interiority of religion—an interiority coming from the entrance of not only a new principle, but a new personality, into the very soul of his followers—a differentiating fact of his religion. Take the case

of the foremost men of Christ's own century. He certainly did leave this as his profound impression upon them, that he gave to men a special interior life. Paul said that "God revealed his Son in me." The book misnamed "The Acts of the Apostles," is really the record of "Christ the Spirit," as he lived in men's souls, after he had lived among men in bodily form. Paul writes that God "gave life to us in giving life to Christ."[1] And the history of spiritual religion in the world is the continuation of the record. In millions of instances there has been wrought a conviction of the fulfilment of the promise, "I am with you." Sometimes intellectual apprehension has come first. But often the nimblest logic has been that of the heart. Some One has been revealed. The light has not been the discovery of new principles so much as the discovery of a new person. There has been a verification of the great historical facts; the subjective has found its objective. The Christ of nineteen hundred years ago has come to be a present Christ, imparting today this new inward life. The Epistles of the New Testament addressed to Christians, in reminding them of their experience in the religion of Christ, take it for granted that they all believe in this divine indwelling. These Christians are exhorted to remember that Christ is "in them the hope of glory"; that the "Spirit of Christ is in them"; that they have in their hearts "the witness of

[1] Eph. 1 : 5.

the Spirit." Indeed, the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are so connected in the representation that a verse may begin with the one form of words and end with the other. And Christ speaks not only of coming to his disciples, but of "abiding in them and they in him." Words cannot be used that shall describe a closer intimacy than these. They declare that Christ is in his disciples in a very vital sense which, so far from interfering with their personality, really expands it. It may be true that many good Christians need to enter more fully into the experiential knowledge of what they know only in an elemental way; that they are, in turn, so to be in him as to make their religion a thoroughly vitalized thing. Happily, some do this; and their spiritual life throbs in unison with the heart of Christ.

II. In all the better human thought there is a demand not only for life, but also for light. In us is a consciousness that we know just enough in the moral realm of things to need to know more. It is a knowledge of our ignorance that makes us, in our best moods, willing to be taught. Intellectually we all start in crudeness, but we are disciplined into careful and exact thought by teachers. They give us facts and show us how to use them. The outcome of genuine teaching is trust in those who, in addition to larger opportunities, larger experience, and larger knowledge, are shown to be worthy of

our confidence. We are so situated that it becomes a reasonable thing to have regard to the conclusions of specialists. And we are so constituted and so circumstanced as to need, in religion above all things else, a specialist, if we would know definitely and largely about these things of the very highest concern to us. Trust in one's self can go but a little way here; and trust in others can go but little farther in these matters. Browning sings:

> Now who shall arbitrate?
> Ten men love what I hate,
> Shun what I follow, slight what I receive—
> Ten who, in ears and eyes,
> Match me; we all surmise,
> They, this thing; and I, that. Whom
> Shall my soul believe?

We are made up less like the oak that stands by itself, and more like the ivy that clings to it. Capacity to be taught means here need of a teacher. We begin by knowing something through native insight. We add a little by practical experience. We get something still further as it has expressed itself in the literature of past centuries. But perhaps our largest acquirement is the knowledge that in religion we need "a teacher sent from God." How much such a one could settle! How many things we could trust with such a Teacher! It might wound, at first, our poor human pride to have to submit all our opinions to him; and to have to receive, on questions above our human solution, his

dictum, taking from him our beliefs, his word the end of all controversy, and we being just simply his disciples; but if it would harm our pride, it would amazingly help our certainty and our satisfaction. In religion we can see that the most reasonable thing to do would be to make such a Christ the ultimate and absolute authority. It would be true, perhaps, that such a conversion from self to him would be the hardest thing to accomplish in a self-willed man; but it would be falling up the altar stairs toward God and his Christ. This is not degradation; it is exaltation. We trust men in their sphere of knowledge. We are made up to do so. We should trust God in his sphere of knowledge. He must reveal some things that we do not understand; else why any revelation? He must reveal some things which apart from his revelation we would not believe. If not, then God could teach us nothing we did not know before.

To reject his teaching on that account would be to commit the folly of making ourselves gods. Trust, in some circumstances, is highest reason. It was so in regard to many a teaching in science which seemed opposed to all our early ideas of things. But we yielded to the teaching of those whose superior knowledge of the facts gave weight to their conclusions. In the domain of moral facts, God's horizon must be so broad that we are warranted in standing fast to his statements of truth in matters that, because of their nature, go beyond our mental

and moral ken. As in physical things, so in spiritual things we must own divine transcendence. One of the wisest of the ancients said, when returning a volume loaned to him by a friend, that the parts of it he could understand were so reasonable he was sure the part he did not understand was not foolish. What we can approve in God's revelation is so consonant with reason and experience that we can trust him when his revelations are above our reasonings and experiences. And just here we see the fitness both of God's revelation and indorsement of Jesus Christ as the great Teacher, and of our acceptance of that revelation and indorsement.

The certitude of Christ in his teachings is a remarkable thing. He never hesitates; never advances a "probable opinion"; never asks us to accept a "working hypothesis"; never argues the case, except to confute an opponent from that which an opponent has admitted. His certitude is inexplicable on the theory that he is to be classed as a merely human teacher. Such a human teacher, modestly, on the greatest problems, advances an opinion "as the best that can now be said on this matter as the result of all our investigation." But Jesus speaks as one who knows. Some of his sayings at once commend themselves. But even when this is the case, there is a tone that separates them from the utterances of others. He left an impression that was unique. We are sure

from what he says and the way he says it that he could say more. We see that he could easily go very far beyond us. We expect him to make more moral disclosures. And if he shall do it, he has prepared us to trust him in his utterances. We feel that his horizon is broader than ours. His tone in every word is that of one from another world, and we are not surprised to hear him claim for himself preexistence with God, and that he was sent out from God; and that as he came out from heaven, so he would return to it. When he so speaks, he speaks in character. He strangely and yet harmoniously blends the sympathy of a human, and the authority of a divine, Teacher. He meets men on their own level, and yet he also leaves the conviction that he speaks from a higher level. His language is human, but his authority is divine. His moral character is behind every word. His miracles are words coined into the form of deeds. Thinking alone of the clear human nature he ever manifested, we wonder that he ever does his deeds; and thinking alone of his other nature, we wonder at his reserve in miracle; and so we are profoundly moved by the happy union of these qualities in which they suffer no contradiction. He harmonizes the widest contrasts.

This kind of a teacher, when we take him in his wholeness, refuses to be put in any of our lists of merely human teachers. He must not be quoted in the same sentence with them. He stands quite

apart, and therefore fulfils the demands of human thought. He—he only—does not surprise us when he says, "I am the light of the world." Taking, note of his character, we can trust this utterance of his own consciousness concerning himself; and we find this declaration to be not only in perfect accord with his whole marvelous life as depicted in these four Gospels written from the reports of eye-witnesses, but also with the great moral purposes of that life as these are disclosed in the New Testament Epistles written after his earthly career had ended.

In the introduction of his Gospel, John, in describing the beginning of Christ's earthly career, says: "The true Light, which lighteth every man, was coming into the world." Then, describing the reception Christ met, he says some "received him" and some "received him not." So that in the case of both classes there was responsibility in view of the incoming light. In both cases there was capacity to be lighted. The soul is made on purpose to receive a superior light. Its whole range of faculty is indicative. Its aspirations in all best, truest, most normal moments show a being who is not his own end. Even in the wholeness of its powers the human soul is not a completion, but an implication. It is divinely made up to be divinely lighted up. It can be touched into a flame by receiving the touch of him who is the Light of the world. In John's suggestive words, it was

planned that the Light should "overcome the darkness." It began to do this in the case of the few who first "received him." It is to be an overcoming power as through the ages men, "coming to themselves," see their capacities and their aspirations first enlarged and ennobled, and then perfectly satisfied in Jesus Christ as both the Light and the Life. The morally fit in the end will be found to be the logically true.

One cannot help, pausing at this point just a moment, asking whence arose such a conception? How did it ever come into this realm of human thought? Has human thought created a conception greater than the conception which divine thought could make real in our world? Is man in his idea of such a Christ greater than God in his realization of it? It cannot be so. And yet this unique conception, that has both amazed and delighted foremost moral thought in all the past Christian centuries and has brought this amazement and delight to a higher degree of experience in our own age than ever before—this conception is founded on these Gospels as they depict this Person who claims to be both the Life and the Light of the world. State it either way. Say the conception is impossible without the Gospels, or say that these Gospels were impossible without such a conception as was originally realized in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the result is the same.

Nor were his teachings culled from human

sources. One never thinks of Jesus as a scholar laboriously extracting from the world's great masters the best moral teachings and using them in his discourse. There is, indeed, the precision in his words which shows an early training in the careful use of language. And he is at home in the Old Testament Scriptures. He knows something of the rabbinical expositions, disquisitions, and traditions current in his day. But of those vast stores of intellectual and moral research which existed at that time and which are to-day studied by those whom the world justly calls "learned men," he exhibits no knowledge. Nor is this apparent ignorance to be urged against the position of those who claim for him a true divinity. What such claimants need to insist upon is, that all he needed at any one moment to know of human and of divine knowledge for his mission, he at that one moment certainly knew. Momentary obscuration concerning other matters only shows the necessary limitations of his peculiar earthly mission. Some of the foremost thinkers of the world have not been the world's foremost scholars. Their logic has been not the less logical because not a formal logic. Keenness of mind, ability to think a thing through, evenness of judgment as to related subjects, have stood them in good stead rather than varied knowledge of what the leaders of human opinion have thought in the realms of morals and religion. The uniqueness of Christ's character, mission, and situation

all require of him originality of thought rather than wide human learning. But this is certainly true, that he takes up all those great convictions in morals and religion which had been recognized as "the natural religion," and enforces them by such new motives, that each of the immortal truths, as it is re-uttered by him, seems so new as to amaze men. That is proof of genius in a merely human teacher. But in such a teacher as Jesus speaking as he does, this newness of the old becomes an additional proof of the divinity of himself and of his utterances. He is the "Light of the world." The created sun in the Genesis narration gathers up the cosmic rays of the dimly diffused light in the interstellar spaces, when God says, "Let there be light." And the Christ of God takes up into himself all the virtues, and into his teaching all the moral knowledge the world has need to know.

While humanity remains ever the same in its essential moral requirements, each separate age has its own characteristic needs. It has its own questions arising from its own stage of development. New problems confront, old problems have new emphasis. And in view of these things, we may ask how does this Christ meet them? He lived, it is true, in one age, among one nation, and in but one generation. But it was a peculiar age, for it had gathered up into itself, with a kind of intellectual and moral universality, all that was best of philosophic thought, all that was valuable of

moral teaching, and all that was of most worth in liberal culture that the previous centuries had produced. This Christ had indeed lived amid the scenes of a single national life. But that nation, though so small, had occupied a peculiar position in which it had fronted all the three known continents of the world. Its situation was such that every other nation had coveted it, fought for it, and hoped to possess it by force of arms or of diplomacy. So that all done in Palestine, on that eastern shore of the Mediterranean, took speedily the gaze of the whole known world. This Christ lived in a single generation, but it was a generation in which Greek thinking and universal Roman law had so quickened all human impulse that the spirit of an unwonted emigration had seized on all men, and divers populations were mingled in all the great central cities of the world as never before; so that any teacher and any teaching of religion had world-wide audience and consideration. And thus while much of Christ's doctrine might be unwelcome, the knowledge of him and his teachings was soon widespread among the generations. His rules for outward conduct were few, but the spirit of the teachings went down into the central life of every man. If the forms of language he employed were Oriental, the principles he enunciated were universal. In him the ages met and still meet. He ever liveth. To speak of Jesus Christ as the recognized exemplification of all that is loving would seem al-

most superfluous in a century in which, when there is any exhibition of special love, men are agreed in calling such an instance of affection peculiarly Christlike. He has evoked at least that degree of praise from all mankind.

The day for assaults upon one exhibiting such traits of character has gone by. Humanity will not endure it. Skeptics dare not speak against Christ. They know that the reaction would harm their cause. On the very surface of Christ's life the quality of love is manifest. But beneath the surface something is uniquely basal. It evokes inquiry. What is the peculiar quality behind all this love? There is not simply a profoundly human love for humanity; but this human love, a radiant cloud itself, is shot through and through by the rays of a sun surpassing in glory all that ever shone before. God's love in its perfection sublimates all human love. The outward miracles of mercifulness are in themselves wonderful; but the special wonder is the Miracle-worker himself. And no man may study the one apart from the other. The miracles do more than heal the sick, for they reveal the Christ as himself the miracle of miracles. See the impression the story of them and of him as their author has left upon the centuries. Somebody made that impression of being a unique person in the matter of loving—made it in the generation in which he lived; made it as the record was studied in the next centuries; made it a deeper

thing as the deeper studies of these last long centuries have gone on. And this ever-growing impression is more pronounced to-day than ever before. The whole round world recognizes Christ as the impersonation of love. No such character in the height and depth of so peculiar a love had been depicted in history.

It is of course true that merely human affection has had its picture drawn by skilful limners. The imagination had been given largest range of wing, and had fallen backward and downward in discomfiture. There had been a lack. The inwardness of love had not been understood. The real uniqueness was not even imagined. There had to be an original, that there might be a portrait. The Christ of the eternal love had to exist. The spectacle of One permitted of the Father to become an exile from his native heaven, and who, while true to the All Holy before men, is yet in such sympathy with them also in their lowliness and weakness, that notwithstanding their sinfulness, he will become the child in the manger, so that he can put the hand of a loving helpfulness under each weakest man and lift him out of his resultant weakness, so that he can raise the lowliest from sinfulness to the fellowship of the All-holy One—that spectacle, once seen, holds the attention forever of any man who will look upon it truly even for a single moment.

But the mingled glory and abasement of the manger-birth are but the preparatory exhibition of

this singular love. The motives, as Jesus comes up into the fulness of his great career, has no commingling of that spiritual pride that seeks self-realization as the end of life. Self-development is not the underlying purpose, but "the loving back into love" of those who had lost love for the highest, holiest, and most loving One. Jesus Christ is bringing back to the unthrifty prodigal clothes and shoes and feast and home, by bringing him back to the higher thing—by restoring the Father to him and him to the Father. It is the divine love giving the human love the largest scope and greatest intensity—securing the better by putting foremost the best. Jesus Christ lives that marvelous life in which, in things commanded, he is our example; but in more things, and those the uncommanded things, that life is not to be attempted by us. But whether he is with us or apart from us in his mission, the peculiarity of his love is always manifested. It is love having its own distinctive quality; and so it was able to touch human life on all sides of it as he stood among living men. Individual himself, he was the great individualist in his teachings; but the individualism he taught touched all human relations. He owned the "things of Cæsar," and also the "things of God." The swift years went on, and before a furrow touched his brow or any thread of silver graced his head, in the glory of his young, strong manhood, he must leave us. Then came the love shown in Gethsemane and the love shown also

at Calvary. Description is impossible. "Behold what manner of love!" No man ever yielded himself to the conception and then failed to believe in "the love."

One more thing must be noticed. It is the unique union of nearness and yet of distance that this Christ exhibits. In his recorded earthly life he presents the peculiar pathos of a being from another world voluntarily subjecting himself to lower conditions than those to which he had been accustomed. Usually the great man has a certain distance about him; is not easily approachable; is aware of his own distinction in talent, in acquirement, in position in his chosen sphere of operation; and this difference constantly manifests itself. It makes him a man apart from his fellow-men. He is detached from common people by his sympathy for superior things and persons. But while the tokens of this consciousness of moral superiority are clearly manifest in the words and works of Jesus, yet strange to say that, so far from detaching him, this superiority unites him to the race of mankind. John, his forerunner, might inhabit the wilderness. Jesus inhabited men. He rejoiced with them at their marriages, he wept with them at their funerals. He walked with them on the windy thoroughfares of their ordinary life, was with them in the social concerns of their sheltered homes; and yet there was constantly the separation in all this unity. In the middle year of his publicity there were crowds

about him; but when in their misunderstanding they would make him a king to head a revolt against Rome, he withdrew from them to a desert place. He spent whole nights in prayer and whole days in his public work. He is, in turns, honored by the crowds and forsaken by them. Rejected in his home city, next he is received and then rejected at Capernaum, the central city of Jewish commerce; and last of all, he is received and rejected at Jerusalem, the central city of the Jewish religion.

John's life had been pathetic. The forerunner had modestly said that he was only "a voice"—"a voice" as of a lone bird in the wilderness calling for its mate; only "a voice," but plaintive as of one who must decrease because another must increase. John gathers the crowd, but is snatched away to a solitary prison, and his life is taken at the request of a dancing girl. He is only a "voice in the wilderness." He is nothing in himself. He is in his whole career pathetic. But if his life is pathetic, the career of Jesus is pathos itself. He is lonely among crowds. He is with the world, but is not of the world. His mission of a tragic death comes over him. In the midst of life the shadow of the cross is on his sunniest days. Separated from sinners he is adjudged as a sinner by the men he would save from sin. His life would seem a failure because of his death; but instead of failure, his cross is his success, and above all he ever did or said, that cross has drawn, as he predicted, the attention

of the world. Buried in a borrowed tomb, he rises to build his church on an emptied sepulcher.

As men meditate on the vicissitudes of that earthly life, they become enamored with it. No other life approaches it in its strange separateness. And yet no other life was ever lived in such close intimacy with the very soul of every man. Human thought can ask no more; can do no more and no less than accept the fact of facts. Let human thought reverently own its Lord and Master in his mingled glory and humiliation. So far from getting beyond, it does not reach up to the plane he occupies. Let it stand apart and worship, as it finds in him the fulfilment of all it can demand and desire. Nothing else can give such psychological satisfaction as the study of the mind of Christ and of his influence on human thinking.

Another demand is disclosed as we study human thought in its processes. It is the craving for a personality manifested both in God and in man, and calling for exhibition in some single being. No natural desire is stronger than that which finds its satisfaction in persons who possess similar personal qualities. There is a hunger of the soul that makes one seek another person with whom, as far as possible, personality can be shared. It is not only the call for personality of the same intellectual and moral grade, but for a personality of similar tastes and acquirements. When this is found we call it sometimes the "giving of the heart" to that other

person. This is the basal fact in the sociological and moral relationship of the human race. Not only being, but quality of being; not only ability, but character, is required in order that our own personality may find its rest in that of another being. Dropping for a moment the fact of a sinful perversion, and remembering only those wonderful endowments bestowed on human nature as such, we may think of man as craving God and of God as equally craving man. Each would find satisfaction in the other. There is capacity for response in all intellectual being. There is capacity for response in all moral being. There is response in the whole tier of our faculties for the highest kind of life that man can possibly know.

But—we may not ignore it—there has been a misfortune and something worse than misfortune. There has come into our nature a disorderly element, a disturbing force, a sad moral revolution which, leaving us still men with all our noble faculties, has brought about that perversion of them which so pains every careful student of our human nature. It alters psychological fact. It tends to dim some perceptions, to throw some potencies out of order. It disturbs that harmony of working which we can see was originally a possibility. True, there still remain the original cravings of these natural faculties after God; though so often overborne by the voluntary and sinful nature. The soul's best instincts are in the prison-house under the throne-

room, while inferior desires take the throne originally occupied by the better self. But the usurping "servant abideth not in the house forever" by any right. And God looks down on his work marked and marred by this human sin. We shrink under his gaze. And yet in our best moments we would rather have him look with condemning eye than with approving eye upon us in our sinfulness. We may not suppress the fact of the sin. We lower ourselves in moral grade by any suppression or denial. God should, and God does, with his infinitely pure conscience, condemn us. But we are still in the grade of moral beings—the grade in which he exists. He must still love us as those who have capacities for loving him and for being loved by him. His love is the broad love for similar grade of being. If the sin could be forgiven and the man morally restored, then God could again love with the love of moral approbation. Can this be done? No fiat of omnipotence can change the fact or the quality of even a single sin. It cannot be annihilated, cannot be treated as a nonentity, cannot be overlooked; nor can it ever perish from the memory of God that a wrong has been done. So far as can be seen by us, there is only one way out of it—that of forgiveness. Can it be forgiven? All the best thinking of the old thinkers insisted that this could not be done. It was thought that one must suffer out the natural penalty of wrongdoing. But that is exactly the opposite of the for-

giveness of a sin. Forgiveness of a sin means the divine remembrance of it—or there would be nothing recalled to be forgiven; the divine judgment on it that it was wrong, or there would be nothing existent to have forgiveness; the divine obligation to punish it—or there would be no moral government in God's universe. And so forgiveness is no easy thing to conceive of or to accomplish. A Chinese philosopher said, "God could no more forgive a sin than he could make twice two to be five." It is plain that there must be somewhere an adequate reason for forgiving a sin if that thing is ever to be done. Fiat forgiveness would be no forgiveness at all.

Then too, associated with the forgiveness must be the restoration of the qualities that God loves, so that his love may be more than the mere love of being, but may be the love of the right moral quality in the being loved. Divine love seeks to do both things, viz., to find an object of the same moral grade, and then to find in that same grade a being with the responsive qualities. Alike in Old Testament and New, this distinction as to qualities of love finds expression. But here is the further fact of God proposing to love men back into loving him. He will solve the double problem of forgiveness and of restoration. He will do it through the manifestation of himself in the Person of all persons—the personal Christ. We must not think of God as impassive. If man may voluntarily suffer in self-

denial for others' good, then God may do it; otherwise man would in that matter be superior to God.

But all discussion concerning theories of moral atonement and of spiritual renewal would lead us far afield. There are many of them. Probably each has some truth about it, and probably each some error. Each meets some want in human thought or experience. The whole truth of atonement or of renewal no one can possibly know save God himself. The little part we do see fills us with amazement as we recognize in it the manifestation of the divine love in its yearning for all men, and as it finds its rest and satisfaction in those who are moved to a true response toward this love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The processes of Christian thought as we turn the thick-leaved volume of religious experience are shown to find their complete fruition now in one and now in another phase of Christ's marvelous personality and of his accomplished redemption. Now, his manhood satisfies, and he is to believers in him the great human-hearted Jesus Christ; and anon, when a few years have gone by, it is the divine Christ, the Christ of the dateless years, as depicted in John's Gospel, who meets the soul's cravings. At one time the incarnation—just the simple fact of his wonderful coming—fills all the horizon of one's thought; at another it is that singular life in the fulness of it that rises into prominence. Sometimes the atoning death as, in his own words, his "blood is shed for the remis-

sion of sins," comes home to the soul, and sometimes Christ's resurrection is, as with Paul, the lens through which one looks back at the death, and then back through the death to the previous life, and then back through the life to the mysterious One "born of a woman" at Bethlehem.

And in foremost moments of Christian experience the heart goes on beyond the resurrection to the ascension of the Lord. The completed conception of a resurrection asks for the latter event. His body was not to remain in the grave. No more was he to live a bodily life on earth. It was no merely spectacular event when Jesus visibly ascended in the heavens. There was to be an enthronement of humanity as manifesting God. Jesus was not only to get the victory over death by submitting to it and by rising from it, but resurrection was to have its fit crown in the wonderful ascension. There was a completeness not only in the event as an event, but in the world's completed thought of him in all ages. Claiming to be the Lord "from heaven," it was the fit thing for Christ to resume his own heaven.

That was a glorious ending for the Christ. And parallel thereto, it is a glorious thing for a human soul when it resumes its native place; when, after seeking elsewhere in vain, it returns to quench its thirst for the divine at the fountain of the Infinite Fulness; when it hears Christ say, "Come unto me and drink."

We may pause here. Hitherto the view has been perspective; let it now be retrospective. Arrived at the position to which human thought considered as a process has led us, we can stand on this mountain peak and look with clearer vision on what was regarded only in a general way as we came on and climbed to this eminence. Human thought not so much in its contents as in its processes has been studied; though it has had to be studied only in a broad and general way. But now on this eminence and in the clearer light of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, we can see (1) the records of the Old Testament in their more specific meaning. Before the view could only be generic; but now such a personage as Jesus Christ once found, we can recognize, not so much a normal and natural as a special and providential development in Hebrew history. A hand is seen in it as in no other history which has come down to us across the separating centuries. Both the events themselves and the book that records them show something unaccountable when regarded apart from God's inspiration. No wonder that those who insist on believing that only national development is to be looked for in that Hebrew history are perplexed. No wonder that on merely naturalistic conceptions they find contradictions and almost absurdities. Having missed the one special purpose—that of a unique development of God's revelation of himself—they have to invent now this and now that theory to account for the

prevalence in the history of Israel not only of peculiar facts, but also of ideas far in advance of what was possible as the result of any merely natural evolution. Such conceptions of God and of man's duty to him, such ideas of moral righteousness, such an outlook upon the material and spiritual universe, are long centuries in advance of what any merely naturalistic student would expect to find. And so those who have set up the standard of "natural moral development" have wished to redate the books and to discover for them far later authors who wrote in far later times.

But here is the peculiarity: that in the Old Testament these advanced moral conceptions do not grow from any natural germs. No circumstances nor situations will account for the phenomena. They cannot be explained as arising from any ordinary process. Psalmists and prophets in their utterances are very far beyond their age, and as far beyond and above their own personal development of knowledge or of piety. No "spirit of the age" can account for these conceptions. These men see their own times indeed; but they often see far on beyond their own nationality, beyond their own century, and even beyond their own dispensation. There is one—only one—explanation. It is Jesus Christ. "The Spirit of Christ in them did testify." "To him gave all the prophets witness." He had his theophanies. He came to men before he came into the human race at Bethlehem. He came to the

tent of Abraham who, the devoutest of monotheists, recognized in his visitor the "Lord his God." He spoke as a friend "face to face" with Moses; was "Captain of the Lord's host" to Joshua; and he was the "fourth" with the three men in the fiery furnace when all cried out, "The Son of God."

And in addition to the theophanies, there was shed occasionally upon historian and prophet and poet, and sometimes upon the whole Hebrew people, a peculiar moral illumination. There was "open vision" at times. There was the direction to Moses to "write these things in the book"; and the "word of the Lord" was something that was so far beyond not only heathendom, but beyond Israel itself, that at times there was danger of worship of the written "law of the Lord" instead of the worship of God himself. But from this merely physical reverence for "the roll" they were to be delivered by that better spiritual reverence when, in obedience to the Christ "they searched the Scriptures" because, as he said, "they testify of me." These Scriptures, always in Christ's heart while he was with us, were constantly on his lips. He connected with himself and his mission many a verse of the Old Testament which, apart from his words, we should not have called Messianic, so saturated was he with the book, and so spiritual was his interpretation of it. That book was all focused on himself, as he told the two

travelers to Emmaus. As the oak in the acorn, so the primal promise in the first of the Old Testament books held in itself the Christ of the New Testament. The whole process of the world's devoutest thought completed itself in Jesus Christ. And then, in turn, the Hebrew Scriptures, which claim for themselves to be a revelation of God, are divinely indorsed and certified by him. Thus these writers of the Old Testament were planetary souls deriving their light from this sun. He quotes them as written authority in religion.

We can see (2) that God's exaltation of Jesus Christ is in line with his method of ruling the world through great men.

The question has been often debated whether the great movements in the history of the race have come through "the spirit of the age," or whether they came about through the advent of some great man who has turned into new channels the course of affairs. But whatever may be true in these last more democratic centuries, human history as a great whole has been dominated by "the great man." God, to use the words spoken of an ancient world ruler, has in every case "raised him up." God has directly or indirectly used him. The great man has often seen "the tendency of the age"; and his greatness has shown itself in his ability to put himself at the head of the popular movement, and stamp his own impress on the plastic clay. Great men the centuries through have led the world in war

and in peace, in commerce and in statesmanship. And this fact is the standing puzzle of those who would account for the events of human history on merely naturalistic principles; who would leave no room for God because giving so much room for man's natural development. They who insist on the narrower view must themselves admit, as Ranke says about them, "that they always leave something unexplained." One might say that they make most things inexplicable. And to such men the religious genius is always the greatest puzzle. He is utterly outside the regular processes of mental and moral development. There is no place for him. He is an intrusion upon their mathematics. And yet he is a factor in human history. He has overturned nations, crushed or promoted liberty, helped or hindered whole ages of civilization and changed the whole map of the world for the better or the worse. There is no danger of the decay of religions in the world, each named for its leader. The only question is which one, in the long probation of the centuries, is to have moral preeminence? which has in it the person who so sums up essential moral thought that it can wait for the final victory? which one of them gathers itself about a person predicted in the continuous existence and the processes of the moral faculties in man, reflecting as they do the intellectual and moral faculties and processes of God himself?

The one great man, "the Son of man," as he

called himself, the central potency of the gospel, is Jesus Christ. So far as our argument is concerned, we need not consider the question of how far his religion has or has not prevailed as yet. For if it had not as yet a dozen professed believers on earth, that fact could not harm the thing we are seeking to find, viz., the mental and moral processes shown in a human soul as indicative of the moral self-manifestation of God. To Jesus Christ they all point. He is the focus, not only of all noble imagination, but of all perpetual fact in our mental and moral constitution as men. "We see not yet all things put under him—but we see Christ"; so reasons a great reasoner in his argument for the Christ of Christianity. Presently blurred vision will become clear, and the Christ now getting partial recognition from the best souls in the world will come to be seen in the completed faith of the final ages. Even now there are unmistakable signs of a "return to faith" in foremost thinkers. Christ is getting himself acknowledged as the "model man." But this is only one step. For he being the model, we are all as men far from the standard he sets for us in his spirit and life. And so by that standard shown to be sinners, men must come to recognize him as their needed Saviour as well. The whole Christ of the New Testament will have to be taken up at length into human thought as in his completeness he meets its demands, fulfils its purposes, and becomes its culmination.

It may be asked why if these premonitions, indications, expectations, and anticipations, these unique faculties, these intellectual and moral intuitions do really exist, every man does not actually go on by virtue of all these human qualities to the acknowledgment of God and his Christ? There is only one answer. It is this: the "bad miracle of sin" has occurred, thwarting right moral action. The trail of the serpent is on the fairest flowers of our Eden. And so there is need as well as opportunity for the "good miracle of gracious and divine intervention" by which our Eden can be regained. And these very thwartings of a better tendency only show more clearly the original constitution and course of human nature in its processes of thought. The divine ideal in this work of God seeks the actual and never rests until it finds it in the revealed Christ.

We see also (3) from the position we have now gained that the persons who depict such a historic Christ in the New Testament must both have needed and received divine assistance in their work. The earliest Christian documents were some of the Epistles. These give us the Christ as the Gospels do not, in his broadest relations both Godward and manward. There was needed, and there was furnished, first of all, documentary statement of the meaning of Christ's career—the broad comprehensive survey and declaration of the gospel in its wholeness. There were subsequently added what are known as "the four Gospels," the office of which

was to fill in the grand outline statements with their many incidents of Christ's career. Now it is clear that any such thing as a misstatement through lack of apprehension of the great object, the fundamental purpose, and the comprehensive scope of the new religion, would make it so untrustworthy as to be useless. In such a matter above every other under the face of the whole heavens, accuracy is needed and mistake is fatal. The wonderful advent with all that occurred between it and the wonderful resurrection and ascension might almost as well never have occurred, and such a Christ might almost as well never have left his native heaven, as to have had the whole moral conception of it liable to mistake on this all-important matter. We can allow the "personal equation" its full expression so far as mode of utterance in speaker and method of composition in writer is concerned. But an error in the vital conception of the whole substance and of the entire moral meaning of the new religion could not be. We can all make mistakes enough without an untrustworthy guide. The God who did so much in sending the Only Begotten would not be likely to put the gift in such peril as to make it practically worthless through any lack of directing the men who were to make authentic records by direction of their Master. At least some degree—to say the least—of divine guidance may reasonably be considered as absolutely necessary to perpetuate the knowledge of "the gift of all gifts."

And if we turn from Epistle to Gospel, the demand is in another way equally evident. When we see from the daily press of our own times how thoroughly unlike is the story of the same transaction as given by two equally honest reporters, we must hold it true that the record of such peculiar words and works as those of Jesus Christ needs, if it is to be trustworthy, a superintendence that is more than human. If the utterances of the merely human prophets of the Old Testament are introduced by the formula, "thus saith the Lord," it must not be held strange that Jesus declared that the guiding "Spirit of God" should lead the recording apostles "into all truth" about "the things he had spoken"—a promise which has no other credible claimants than these New Testament writers. Their story is not translucent; it is transparent. You are not looking in a dim mirror, but through crystalline glass. The personal element is reduced to a minimum. These writers see, and they let you see, Jesus as he is doing his works; they hear him, and make you hear him, as he utters his words. You are in the Lord's presence. You are breathing his atmosphere. Forgetting themselves they exhibit him; and it is only afterward that you think of the art of their artlessness as they give us their imperishable story. Through their perfect sympathy with him you get the double conviction that he was the One he claimed to be, and that they were divinely assisted in their story of what he did

and said. Take at random almost any narration as you open your New Testament. Your Bible opens, it may be, at the great prayer of the Lord when he is praying for his disciples just before his death:

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. All mine are thine and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that

the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to thee and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory that thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.

Such is the prayer, with its peculiar blending of agony and of love, its affectionateness toward God

and its sympathy toward man, its yearning and yet its submission, its uplook and its outlook, that its perfectness would have been conspicuously marred had there been no special divine aid granted to those who thus report it. Left to their unassisted memory, they must have spoiled its completeness by omissions here and there, by their unfortunate words and by their unconscious blunders—all of which in the report of such a prayer, at such a time, by such a Christ, would be painfully apparent. The "prentice hand" in such a report would be all too manifest, apart from the fulfilment of the promised guidance. The record of that prayer as now we have it is certainly an inspired record.

And what shall we say of the prayer itself? It could not have been devised and thrust into the record. We might rest the whole proof of Christianity on that one prayer alone. Here it is on record. Some one prayed this prayer. It is the innermost heart of Jesus; and you feel the very heart-beat. You see him as he wrestles and prevails. No fiction here. He is open-hearted toward his Father God. No one but this Jesus of the Gospels could have offered that prayer. In no other circumstances than near the close of such a career as that of Christ could even he have offered it. "Never read it again in public," said one of the most devout of Christians to her pastor. "It should never be read except alone, on one's knees." It is the laying bare of Christ's whole soul before God

and before man. No one ever so prayed before; no one will ever so pray again. That prayer proves the religion of Christ as he gave it to the world to be true. It gathers up all he ever did or said, all he had been, all he was, and all he is to be. Read but once, read reverently, solemnly, tenderly, and doubt about Christ and his religion is gone forever.

And thus human thought, on its knees and so at its best and in its culminating moments, has its goal. Process finds culmination. The lost chord is struck once more. The one great fact toward which all human faculty turns in its highest exercise, as turns the disturbed needle to its pole, is God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. In the prayer just quoted —the true Lord's Prayer—Jesus discloses his own consciousness of his mission when he says to his Father, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth." "And now I come to thee."

(4) There is, when we look back on these manifestations from this high point of observation, a new view of the material world itself, as connected both with Jesus Christ and the race to which he came that he might bring revelation and redemption. The Christ idea is the matrix for the formation of man and for the world with which he is correlated. The moral, as the highest ideal, dominates the physical, without which there would be no reason or right for the world's existence; and God, revealing himself in Jesus Christ, dominates all other revelations

in the physical, the intellectual, and the moral realms. These material heavens may be conceived of as a vast tent overarching this material earth of ours; and the earth itself as the place to which come both God and man to present before the universe that great moral transaction in which each acts freely—God saving, by his redemption in Jesus Christ, the sinful man who otherwise had been lost; and both God and man getting therefrom the greater exaltation and the larger glory by this double exercise of their highest personality; so that even the physical world, great in itself, is made greater as the selected place for a special divine manifestation. And thus the material and the spiritual universes are found to be used and honored because of their relation to God's constant purpose of self-revelation.

But the material world is not to be conceived of as merely the theater of a special divine manifestation. This world is part of a universe composed of matter and of spirit, each of which has relations to the other and both have relations to God. Matter and its forces are to be regarded as creations of God rather than as emanations and developments. The entity of the universe in its fundamental nature is distinct from the entity of God in his essential nature. It is always outside of God in itself and is a separate thing in kind of existence; though he is transcendent and immanent in his relations to it. When God infuses energy into it, it is not the infusion of himself, but of his created forces. Al-

ways we must keep apart the two radically distinct ideas of a creative and a created power. Forces and things are manifestations not of the substance of God—for then we would worship them—but of the conceptions and ideas of God. They are his material, usable and actually used, for the partial manifestations of his attributes and perfections, but not a part of his essential nature itself.

If we turn from the things and forces of the material universe to the other part of this universal duality, viz., spiritual existence with its forces, we have also to make a very exact distinction between the creative and the created entity. There is no more place for emanation in the realm of spirit than in that of matter. The upward development of a man simply because he is in part a spirit until he comes to be a god is not a possibility, since one is the creator and the other is the created. Moral likeness varies, since it may be increased or diminished; but creational fact is permanently a fact. If then, there is no passing from the one to the other, we must posit any temporal incarnation of Jesus Christ as only an individual manifestation in time, of an eternal incarnation. As he existed in primitive glory "before the world was," we get back to the conception that he was the manifestation of the essential and spiritual nature of God. It follows then, that we may think of "the divine Son as the manifesting person of the Godhead." The object of the incarnation may be conceived of as

the revelation in permanent expression of God himself, whether in time or in eternity; and so it is clear that the eternal future belongs also to man—to him as a race having Jesus Christ in it, in whom God eternally impersonates himself. Humanity is thus forever his dwelling-place, and Christ forever his manifestation of his own Godhead. This is the substance of the song of the most psychological of our poets:

> In the Godhead! I seek and I find it,
> O Saul, it shall be,
> A face like my face that receives thee,
> A man like to me. . . See the Christ stand!

We arrive then, at the fact of an actual physical, intellectual, and moral universe, created purposely as a medium for the manifestation of the Christ of God. He is the one for whom as well as by whom all things were made. So that he can use not only the material he has created in souls and in things, but as the Creator, and so himself the final reason and end of all, he can make special and individual manifestation of himself in closest connection with the physical world of things and the moral world of souls. Because of the very peculiar position of man on a physical earth, with both a physical nature and a moral nature, and because of the attributes of personality conferred upon man, Christ, in order to any real manifestation to men of Godhead itself in its very essence, must needs be born

as man. Eternally "the Son of God," he is to be temporarily incarnate, *i. e.,* born in time. Any manifestation to man of the divine Manifestor, or any redemption of the divine Redeemer is conditioned, in part at least, by man's own apparatus of thought and feeling, by his moral needs, and by his singularly related physical condition and situation. These not only create a demand, but furnish an opportunity for a specific incarnation. No other being can be an incarnation of God, since the universe was "made for him," *i. e.,* Christ, as well as "by him," and "by him all things consist." And while the universe must be conceived of as a created entity outside of the nature of God, the manifesting Christ must be held to be the cause and the end of its existence; so that in it he can do his work of manifesting himself as the God-man. This is exactly the scriptural conception (Col. 1 : 16). "In him (in Christ as the ground of all) were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth; things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all have been created through him," *i. e.,* as the manifesting Christ of God; "and unto him," *i. e.,* as end to which the whole creation looked. "In him all things consist," *i. e.,* stand together after they are made and as they advance toward that end. So also again (Eph. 1 : 21), "He (Christ) is far above all authority . . . and every name, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

Also in John 1 : 10: "He (Christ) was in the world and the world was made by him." The general biblical representation is that God is Creator; and in strict accord with this general representation is the more definite and specific declaration that Christ, as the manifesting God, created the world with direct reference to his own incarnation. Augustine, representing the more ancient "creationism," in distinction from the "emanationism" of his own day, and from the "developmental" philosophy of the preceding heathen centuries, claims in his exposition of the earlier chapters of Genesis, a threefold form of creation, viz.: (1) An original pre-temporal creation of inchoate spirit and matter; (2) a re-creation, or rather a re-formation, out of this unformed spiritual material, of a heaven for God; (3) a re-forming, or re-creating, out of this formless matter that had been dark and meaningless (a kind of nothingness that was the negative of order and of goodness)— of a material earth for man We do not need to indorse these details of Augustinian interpretation; but in the fitting up of the earth for man's abode and in the creation of man with peculiar moral faculties corresponding to those of God himself, we can see that the work of the manifesting Christ of God has both its opportunity and its significance.

We can see also, the place and the scope for the anticipatory redemption by the redeeming Christ. He was no afterthought. He was "the

Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The eternally existent Christ had his position, as the earthly incarnate Christ, exactly arranged; the eternal purpose had its exact expression at the "appointed time." He dominates in all things, alike in creation and redemption. "He became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory—the glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father." If we conceive of the creation, first of all, of chaotic objects and forces both spiritual and physical, and then conceive of a re-creation or re-forming of this plastic material by the manifesting Christ of God for the express purpose of a divine manifestation and redemption, the chaos of meaninglessness becomes the cosmos of moral significance. Then following out the indications given in Genesis (1 : 1 compared with 1 : 7, where another word, signifying not "created," but "constructed," is used), there is light cast on those New Testament verses in which Christ is called "the beginning of the creation of God" and "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."[1] His incarnation is regarded in the Scriptures as foreseen in the vision of God from the outset; so that he is the "firstborn" in dignity of all that are ever born. He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" of the creation of God. And thus over against the disharmony of sin—sin that very actual, but that always inexplicable and unreasonable thing,

[1] Col. 1 : 15, R. V.

alike in its permission, introduction, and continuance—there arises that supreme harmony which comes from the conception of a divine purpose and of an ultimate aim in a universe including in itself our human nature, so that there is through it scope and opportunity for manifestation and redemption in Jesus Christ, alike as the revealing and the redeeming God.

When a man once grasps this idea, he lives in a new world. He sees what are the fundamental principles of human thought; and he sees also that these are simply the reflection of the divine thought. There is a reason for the universe in God as he declares himself in his Only Begotten. And the fact that ultimate human thought must bow reverently before such a Christ shows that this wonderful apparatus for thinking, with its instincts and intuitions, both moral and intellectual, with its potencies for feeling and decision, with its significant processes of activity, has been given us so that we may in some measure be the interpreters of God's revelation through Jesus Christ.

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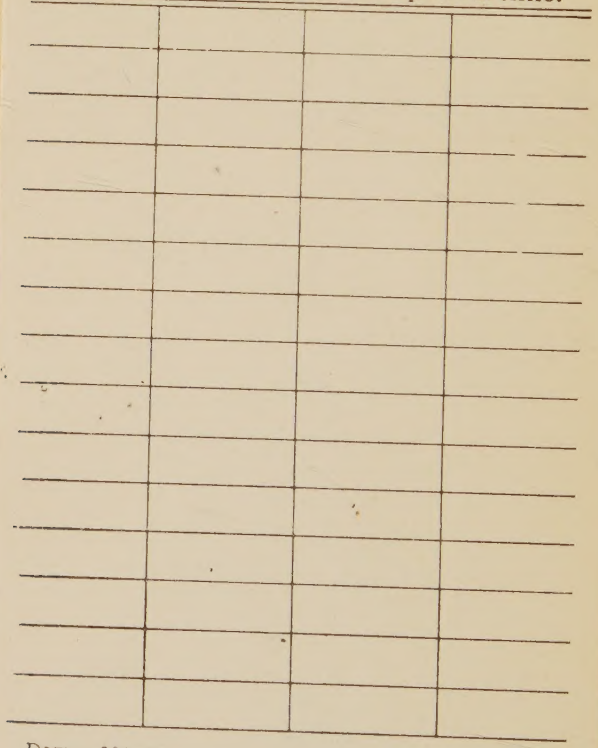

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